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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

18 DAYS BEFORE Christmas

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Trump adviser: Insular concerns often ignored

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

A "strategic consultant" for U.S. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said Friday that the CNMI and Guam are of vital importance to the interests of the United States. The islands' issues, Alan Cobb said, need to be front and center, as they hold strategic importance—both economically and militarily—as the only U.S. territories in Asia.

» GOP frontrunner backs military buildup

See TRUMP on Page 4

Ice task force eyes freezing drug dealers' assets ASAP

» Task force assigns committee groups at inaugural meeting Friday

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

As part of the CNMI's war on methamphetamine, or "ice," lawmakers are planning to mandate stronger forfeiture laws to prevent the overnight disappearing act of drug dealer bank accounts and assets when they are arrested.

In an interview Friday, Sen. Sixto Igisomar, part of the policy committee on the interagency ice task force that met for the first time on Capital Hill Friday, said he will be forwarding a law he drafted earlier this year for review by the CNMI attorney general and the task force.

Igisomar said the new for-

See ICE on Page 4

Seman resigns as HSEM special assistant

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

Marvin Seman, who led Saipan's recovery and restoration efforts as chief of the CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management, has resigned as HSEM's special assistant.

Press secretary Ivan Blanco confirmed Seman's resignation with *Saipan Tribune* last Friday.

Blanco said Seman tendered

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CHRISTMAS IN THE MARIANAS KICKS OFF

Recycled Christmas trees light up Paseo

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

Christmas festivities have come to Saipan as the annual Christmas in the Marianas kicked off last Saturday with the traditional lighting of Christmas trees at the Paseo de Marianas.

Despite the slight drizzle, families and friends joined the organizers in counting down to the lighting of at least 14 Christmas trees. Diann Torres, the wife of acting governor Ralph DLG Torres, led the lighting of the trees around 6pm.

The first

See TREES on Page 4

Twelve Christmas trees decorated by elementary schools on Saipan were lit up last Saturday during the start of the monthlong Christmas in the Marianas event last Saturday. Students and teachers used recycled materials to decorate their trees.
FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON

INSIDE

NATION

Friends say the woman in last week's deadly California rampage had become more devout.

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ASIA

China's island building in the South China Sea might soon quadruple airstrips in the region.

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WORLD

A galleon that went down off Colombia's coast may be the world's largest sunken treasure.

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Local

Camacho is named acting CUC executive director

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has a new acting executive director.

CUC chair Adelina Roberto told *Saipan Tribune* last week that Power Division manager Gary Camacho will now be serving as the acting executive director.

According to Roberto, Camacho will hold CUC's top position in an acting capacity for 60 days.

John Riegel, who is also CUC's chief engineer, has been the acting executive director since Alan Fletcher's contract expired last July. As required by stipulated orders, CUC is mandated to appoint an executive director within 150 days of vacancy.

Riegel's 150-day term in his acting capacity won't end until this week but since he has been on leave since Saturday, the board already appointed Camacho to take his place.

CUC has been unable to find someone to hold the executive director post permanently five months after Fletcher vacated the position.

In a prior interview with Riegel, he said the board is handling the hiring process for the executive director and that there were some applicants.

"I am not involved in that hiring process," Riegel said. "I do know there were several names that were forwarded to [the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency] to get their concurrence about which ones are eligible and the board is still waiting to hear from EPA."

Among the requirements for the position based on the stipulated order is that an applicant should have at least 10 years of senior management experience in a similar wastewater, drinking water, and/or power utility, with similar or greater capital and operating budgets, capital improvement projects, human resource needs, utility financing issues, operation and maintenance training, and implementation needs.

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Trader who couldn't be found by process server surfaces

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A Chinese businessman involved in a legal dispute for ownership of $224,585 in a company's savings account has surfaced to oppose a request to hold him in default for not answering a counterclaim.

In his declaration filed in federal court on Thursday, Mingnan Jin said he did not sign the U.S. Postal Service mail receipt relating to a summons dated Oct. 23, 2015. He said the signature on the receipt belongs to his brother, Jin Mingjin.

Jin said he was not physically present in the CNMI on Oct. 23, 2015, as he was in China to renew his U.S. visa. He said he left Saipan for China on Sept. 18, 2015, and returned on Nov. 27, 2015.

Jin said he did not receive the papers associated with the Oct. 23, 2015, certified mail receipt.

He said when he returned to Saipan on Nov. 27, 2015, he was given some papers by his brother, which he did not understand as it was in English.

A few days later, he said, he brought the papers to his company's legal counsel for review.

Jin asked the court to deny the motion for entry of default as he was not properly served.

Jin's brother, Mingjin Jin, also issued a declaration to corroborate his statement about receiving the mail in his (Mingjin) and wife's postal box.

Attorney Samuel I. Mok, counsel for plaintiff Universal Group Development Inc. (Saipan), attached the declarations of the Jin brothers in Universal Group's opposition to the motion for entry of default against Mingnan Jin.

Mok said cross-claimant Wanzhong Yu failed to satisfy the provision to issue entry of default because Mingnan Jin never actually received the

See TRADER on Page 3

NMC info session for spring 2016 semester

Those who want to further their education and advance in their careers are encouraged to attend the free information session hosted by the Northern Marianas College on Monday, Dec. 14, 2015.

The session, which is open to the public, will be from 6pm to 7pm in Room D-1 at the college's As Terlaje campus. The topics include the college's new bachelor's degree in Business Management, Prior Learning Assessment program, and other new initiatives.

College faculty, staff, and students from the different degree and certificate programs at NMC, as well as Student Services representatives from counseling, financial aid, and admissions, will be on hand to provide information and answer questions.

NMC offers several degree programs, including a bachelor's degree in education, associate degrees, liberal arts, nursing, natural resources management, criminal justice, and hospitality management.

For more information about the information session and/or applying to NMC, contact the Office of Admissions & Records at (670) 237-6770, email oar@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

Tourism Topics

A weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority

Tourism is everybody's business.

2015 Kaohsiung International Travel Fair

The **Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA)** joined the **2015 Kaohsiung International Travel Fair** on Oct. 8-11, 2015, at Kaohsiung Exhibition Center in Taiwan.

In partnership with celebrity **Bear Genie**, **Now News**, and **Sharp Publication**, the MVA had the opportunity to increase awareness of the Northern Marianas as a popular vacation destination to potential visitors and to increase sales of tour packages in southern Taiwan.

Three thousand brochures were distributed at the MVA's booth, and raffle prizes of airline tickets to **Saipan** and **Tinian** were given away. The MVA also promoted 4-night, 5-day packages to Saipan and combination destinations of Saipan and Tinian.

Saipan Tinian Rota

HAFA ADAI & TIROW WAY

Roberto's witness gets 46-month prison term for lying at trial

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Randy A. Igisomar, an inmate who is in prison for the murder of a school security guard, was slapped on Friday with an additional 46-month sentence for lying during the jury trial of Raymond B. Roberto.

The new sentence will be on top of the 22-year sentence he got in the murder case.

After completing his prison term in the murder case, Igisomar will be transferred to federal officials to start serving his 46-month sentence. After completing his prison term at the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, Igisomar will be placed on three years of supervised release.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona said that Igisomar has now committed two crimes.

"It's up to you to make a difference," Manglona told Igisomar. "I want you to succeed."

While in prison, Igisomar can do a lot of positive things, Manglona said, starting with the basics by doing positive things on small things.

"You show them you are a changed man," the judge said, referring to the family of the Marianas High School security guard that Igisomar killed.

Assistant U.S. attorney Garth Backe had recommended a 37-month prison term, citing Igisomar's immediate admission to lying at the Roberto trial.

Attorney Robert T. Torres, counsel for Igisomar, recommended the same prison term, which is the low end of the sentencing guidelines and pursuant to the plea agreement.

"I believe that, having considered everything, justice was done," Torres later said in an interview.

He said what is important is the court also made judicial recommendations considering Igisomar's history and characteristics and the seriousness of the offenses both in the local case and the Roberto case.

Torres said Manglona made the recommendations for rehabilitation, treatment and care, and vocational skills while in U.S. Bureau of Prisons "because those are not available here and hopefully someday that will be available for every defendants or detainee."

Torres said he recommended 37 months in prison, but the court saw it differently in terms of the impact of Igisomar's testimony in the Roberto case.

"While I may take a different view, I respect the court's decision and wish that Randy have the best of luck," he said.

When asked why Igisomar lied during Roberto's trial, Torres said, "That remains unanswered."

Igisomar pleaded guilty to perjury in November 2014. Perjury carries a maximum penalty of a five-year prison term, a $250,000 fine, and a three-year supervised release.

According to the factual basis of the plea deal, Igisomar testified under oath before a federal grand jury on May 6, 2014, that he had heard Roberto—then a defendant in a criminal case—instruct a potential witness to destroy evidence. It was material to the grand jury whether or not Roberto gave that instruction.

Igisomar then changed his testimony in the federal criminal trial of Roberto. On Sept. 10, 2014, he testified that he did not hear Roberto instruct a potential witness in that case to destroy certain evidence.

These sworn statements are irreconcilably contradictory, such that one of them is false, according to the plea agreement.

The indictment also charged Igisomar with obstruction of justice and false statement. Manglona dismissed the charges on Friday as part of the plea deal.

Igisomar was one of three men who bludgeoned to death a school security guard in 2008, burglarized the school, and stole some laptops and other items. He was slapped with a 22-year prison term.

In September 2014, a federal court jury acquitted the 41-year-old Roberto of all charges that he enticed three minors to engage in prostitution and tampered with a witness while in jail.

Roberto's other witness, former firefighter Richard S. Benavente, was also charged with three counts of perjury and one count of obstruction of justice for also allegedly lying during Roberto's trial. Manglona determined that Benavente lied in his testimony.

TRADER

From Page 2

certified mail containing the cross-claim against him.

Mok said it was the brother, Mingjin Jin, who signed the cross-defendant's name because he mistakenly thought he was required to do so based on his conversation with a U.S. Post Office employee.

Process server Rainaldo S. Agulto had declared in September that he failed to locate Mingnan Jin to serve Yu's summons and complaint.

Mingnan Jin and Jinwei Guo are claiming they are the officers and directors of Universal Group and that Guo is now the sole shareholder.

Universal Group, through counsel Mok, is suing its former president and shareholder, Yu, for conversion and the First Hawaiian Bank for breach of contract. Universal Group alleged that Yu and the bank have blocked the company from gaining access to its $225,000 of its own funds from a business savings account.

Yu filed a cross-claim, alleging he was detained in China for 22 months caused by political influence exerted by his former business partners. Yu named Mingnan Jin and Jinwei Guo as defendants in his cross-claim.

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Jury trial of Ogumoro, Manglona reset to March 14

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The jury trial of former Department of Public Safety deputy commissioner Ambrosio T. Ogumoro and Herman M. Manglona Jr. that was supposed to start today, Monday, has been rescheduled to March 14, 2016.

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman ordered the new trial date after the parties in the case held an in-chamber conference with him on Friday afternoon.

In an order after the conference, Wiseman said he will issue an amended pretrial order. He did not indicate the reason for the new schedule.

A source disclosed that the reason was a medical matter. It is not clear who has a medical issue.

Present at the in-chamber conference were assistant attorneys general Matthew Baisley and Heather Barcinas, who are counsel for the government. Attorney Mark Hanson appeared for Ogumoro, while assistant public defender Matthew Meyer appeared for Manglona.

The jury selection scheduled for today, Monday, is cancelled.

The 57-year-old Ogumoro has been charged with eight counts relating to theft by deception, misconduct in public office, conspiracy to commit theft by deception, removal of government property, and theft by unlawful taking.

The information charged Manglona with conspiracy to commit theft by unlawful taking or disposition and receiving stolen property.

Wiseman recently granted the government's motion to dismiss the charges against Ogumoro's other co-defendant, Katherine Manglona, a former police officer.

Katherine Manglona is Ogumoro's girlfriend and sister of Herman Manglona.

According to the allegations, Ogumoro brought a 1995 Toyota Tercel that belonged to DPS to a shop to be repaired using DPS funds totaling $2,500 and then sold the vehicle as "scrap" for only $50 to Manglona.

Ogumoro also allegedly instructed a DPS staff to bring a DPS desktop computer to a shop for repair and the computer was allegedly later used in the office at True North Bar & Grill, which is owned by Ogumoro.

The trial of Ogumoro and two co-defendants in his other criminal case will commence on Jan. 18, 2016.

Ogumoro's co-defendants are former Commonwealth Ports Authority police chief Jordon Kosam, and former CPA police captain John T. Rebuenog. Because of appeals, the case has been delayed for 10 months now.

The case stemmed from the defendants' alleged role in shielding then-attorney general Edward Buckingham from being served with penal summons in 2012.

Ogumoro is facing 15 counts of criminal charges.

The case against three other co-defendants has already been resolved.

TRUMP

From Page 1

When asked, Cobb said his message to Trump advisers or to Trump himself would be to make sure that Guam and the CNMI are treated appropriately and with the appropriate level of importance.

"…Because I don't think that's not always happened in the past," Cobb told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview at the Century Hotel lobby Friday morning

Cobb, a long-time aide to former Kansas senator Bob Dole and a former lobbyist for Koch Industries, has visited Guam, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico as part of his tour of the territories. He is scheduled to visit American Samoa this week.

A common theme that he's heard on his visits, he said, is "a mixed bag of making sure they are being treated equally and fairly" and that policy is flexible even if flexibility doesn't always serve the interests of the territories.

"Each island has unique issues, circumstances, but I think overall that's everybody is just proud, thrilled to be a part of the United States and proud to be United States citizens, so we want to make sure their issues aren't forgotten and aren't lost in the big bureaucratic shuffle, which is easy to happen," he said.

Cobb, who met last week with potential delegates and Republican Party officials and supporters, added that there was also a practical and political reason to his trip, as all territories have delegates to the national convention.

He said he wanted to start discussions about backing Trump and hopefully get support.

"I want to hear firsthand from the citizens here about the issues and the impact of the federal government, both positive and negative," Cobb said.

Military buildup

Cobb said Trump is a certainly in favor of a military buildup.

"Obviously, the decision's already been made to have the islands as a part of that, and that makes sense," he added, referring to the islands' strategic location.

Guam is just beginning its part of hosting the nearly 5,000 Marines and about 1,700 of their dependents, transferring from U.S. bases in Okinawa, Japan to Guam.

Just last week, the Department of Defense released $309 million for the first phase of the base construction in the Finegayan area in Dededo, near the Guam National Wildlife Refuge at Ritidian and Andersen Air Force Base, the *Pacific Daily News* reports.

In the CNMI, the public comment period for U.S. Marine plans—to conduct high-impact live-fire training on Tinian and to lease the whole island of Pagan for similar purposes—closed recently, with the military announcing they would go back to the drawing board for their environmental studies on groundwater and coral impacts, among others.

CNMI government consultants have called these studies "woefully inadequate," and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has withheld rating these studies until more are completed.

When asked about these concerns on impact to the environment and public groups' concerns about their right to resettle the island of Pagan, Cobb said he is just learning about them.

"I want to make sure that Mr. Trump is fully aware of those issues," he added.

He said he would be meeting with top U.S. Marine officials in Guam last weekend to get a firsthand understanding "about some of the positives and concerns."

Immigration

Cobb said Trump is concerned about immigration, but emphasized he is concerned about "illegal" immigration.

"You have different issues here without a border. You have basically shores that are hard to defend, and along those lines you want to make sure you have enough federal personnel to handle the immigration issues, whether it's border and immigration services. And partly, one of my purposes, is to learn what some of these issues are and we can develop a point of view that makes sense for Mr. Trump and also for the islands," Cobb said.

When asked about the impending end of the CNMI contract worker program, Cobb said the issue is fairly new to them.

"We need to take a hard look at it. H-1 and H-2 visas—they sometimes can be abused. I don't know if the company that wants those" have done "an exhaustive search to make sure there are not American citizens to take those jobs."

"But if there's not," Cobb added, "we need to make sure those programs are working and flexible and not too bureaucratic."

He said, in government and politics, you need balance.

"…Making sure that the purposes are served both for the citizens that live here, but also the business and the citizens that live in the mainland," Cobb added.

More reps to come

Cobb's visit comes as part of more planned visits from other Republican presidential candidate representatives.

Local GOP president James Ada said Friday that four more candidates have expressed interest in sending representatives to the CNMI, who, with the rest of the insular territories, make a large part of the delegates in the Western region, which includes California and Guam.

Ada told *Saipan Tribune* that presidential hopefuls Dr. Ben Carson, Jeb Bush, Mark Rubio, and Ted Cruz are planning to send representatives as part of courtesy visits to the island territories.

On the Republican National Convention—to be held in Cleveland, Ohio in July—Ada said they have three delegates so far: himself, Vicky Villagomez, and Bo Palacios.

"We are going to elect six more for the delegates in March," he said, and their alternates.

When asked if he has chosen his candidate, Ada said, "Not yet."

"We haven't met all the people. We have to respect also the other candidates as well. Again, I want to reiterate that the Western region—CNMI, Guam, and all the insular areas—form a very strong team, if not the largest number of delegates that can vote in the upcoming presidential nomination."

Ada will be heading to South Carolina on Jan. 12 for the RNC winter meeting. Last January, he said, candidates Rick Perry, Carson, and Scott Walker spoke in the one held in San Diego, California.

"We'll see a lot of new speakers in this event this upcoming January," Ada said.

SEMAN

From Page 1

his resignation just last Thursday, citing personal reasons.

In a follow-up press release, it stated that Seman resigned "to tend to immediate family matters."

His resignation will be effective on Friday, Dec. 11.

"I accepted special assistant Seman's resignation to allow him the opportunity to tend to the immediate needs of his family. I have also asked that he remain onboard until Jan. 11 to ensure the smooth transition for the acting special assistant for homeland," acting governor Ralph DLG Torres said.

"During this transition period, I have also asked special assistant Seman to serve in other capacities that the administration deems his special skills can be utilized," he added.

Seman was appointed special assistant to HSEM in 2010 to take over the restructuring of the former Emergency Management Office.

According to the Inos administration, Seman modernized the buildings, emergency response capabilities, and ensured the highest level of training was provided to each of his emergency response team members.

The administration also noted that there were many emergency cases where Seman responded alongside first responders in a timely and professional manner.

"Without a doubt, he has a track record of unwavering leadership in times of emergencies and conflicts," it added.

ICE

From Page 1

feiture law is in response to Department of Public Safety concerns.

Ice dealers, Igisomar said, "are so quick" that as soon as they are apprehended, all of the assets under their name change overnight.

"Overnight, the titles of lands, vehicles…are switched over to someone else. And by the time there is a judgment on somebody for sentencing, they go back and their bank accounts are empty or everything else has been wiped out," he said.

He said forfeiture laws need to be stricter such as "a temporary or immediate freeze or holding of all assets or properties, including land, vehicles, and especially, cash."

AG review

Another urgent matter for policy makers is to obtain funds to establish a CNMI Drug Court on island, which will facilitate the rehabilitation of drug users.

The CNMI Judiciary submitted in late November a budget request of $317,189 to establish and fund this drug court.

Policymakers are now waiting on the budget submission of the Community Guidance Center, major partner in the drug court program.

"Hopefully, we can extract that budget immediately so we can send it to the [House] Ways and Means, and actually put a bill together from the House to appropriate the funds necessary," Igisomar said.

"Our main goal is…collaborative and cooperative solutions and discussions so we can come up with ways to tackle this issue before…new drugs come in," he added.

The ice task force plans to meet every two weeks, with committees meeting between those dates.

During the inaugural meeting Friday, members were asked to introduce themselves and describe the resources their agencies could provide to help with the task force's mandate. Committee assignments were also given.

The committee on enforcement is composed of Public Safety Commissioner James Deleon Guerrero, the Special Assistant for Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the chief of the Commonwealth Ports Authority Police, Customs chief Jose Mafnas, and the CNMI attorney general or his designee.

The committee on mental health is composed of Corrections Commissioner Robert Guerrero, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., the Community Guidance Center, and the Public School System.

For the community on use and prevention, the task force has named Judge David A. Wiseman, DPS Commissioner Guerrero, the Corrections commissioner, PSS, and the guidance center.

The committee on policy has Igisomar, Rep. Antonio Sablan, Attorney General Edward Manibusan, DPS commissioner, Customs chief, and the guidance center.

Last October, Gov. Eloy S. Inos signed an executive order to create an interagency "War on Ice" task force, noting the alarming rate that ice has spread destructively throughout the Commonwealth.

The office of Lt. Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is spearheading the task force. It will be responsible for formulating policy to combat the "ice" epidemic, and has been tasked to coordinate planning among law enforcement and other agencies.

TREES

From Page 1

tree on the western side is a giant one where the public can hang their Christmas wishes.

Twelve of the 14 trees were decorated using recycled materials by schools such as Garapan, Kagman, Koblerville, Gregorio T. Camacho, William S. Reyes, and San Vicente elementary schools, Agape Christian School, Grace Christian Academy, Green Meadow School, Mount Carmel School, Marianas Baptist Academy, Northern Mariana International School, and Seventh-day Adventist School.

Many featured used plastics, bottles, tin cans, straws, sacks, caps, laundry nets, and the like to decorate their trees.

Among the eye-catching ones is the tree decorated by Green Meadow School, which has decorations that look like real ornaments as they are painted and showered with glitters.

Another notable tree was that of the Northern Mariana International School's, which has an island-style and native vibe with its use of wooden and natural elements. According to NMI, they used debris from trees, stems, pine cones, and coconut husks from trees downed by Typhoon Soudelor for their special tree.

The trees were judged last Saturday but winners will be announced and awarded on the third Saturday, Dec. 19.

Aside from the tree decorating competition, other contests also began Saturday.

For the Christmas costume contest, representatives from Chacha Oceanview Middle School and Oleai Elementary School presented their wacky dresses.

For the Teachers' Karaoke Competition, representatives from the NMI School and Marianas High School performed.

Other schools will perform in succeeding Saturdays until the announcement of winners on Dec. 19. There will also be a float competition and parade that day.

Festivities will continue the Saturday after Christmas, Dec. 26, when the winners for the Teachers' Karaoke competition will be announced.

As part of the first day's celebration, the Marianas Ukulele performed Christmas carols for the public. Other performances include those from Poksai Guma Chamorro, and Saipan Music and Dance Studio.

The Marianas Visitors Authority was joined by KKMP Foundation & KKMP Radio, Team PDI, CNMI Public School System, Friends of the Paseo and Kinpachi Restaurant to present their signature Christmas event this year.

Star Marianas interested in shipping US mail for CNMI

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In the face of narrowed options for shipping to and from the Marianas region, Star Marianas Air has renewed its expression of interest in shipping U.S. mail for the CNMI.

According to Star Marianas Air president Shaun Christian, Star Marianas Air actually contacted the U.S. Postal Service a few years ago on the possibility of providing transportation for mail within the Marianas.

"We indicated we had aircraft and a willingness. …The USPS said that United [Airlines] was contracted by the USPS to provide mail transportation on routes they flew and sub-contracted routes they didn't fly to qualifying airlines. They put us in contact with United Airlines' person in charge of U.S. Mail, but at that time we did not have a base of operations [in] Guam and when we discussed mail carriage with United we had difficulty in understanding what kind of services they needed, so we were unable to come to an arrangement where we could bid on the service," Christian said.

About a month ago, after the establishment of Star Marianas' base of operations in Guam and the beginning of regular scheduled service from Guam, Christian reached out to the new postmaster on Saipan to let him know the airline's interest in assisting with carrying mail, "as Tinian currently only receives mail twice a week [on] Tuesday and Friday carried by a Guam-based cargo company…"

Star Marianas has several daily flights between Saipan and Tinian.

In addition to reaching out to USPS, Christian sought the help of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's office, who confirmed that United was responsible for administering mail-carrying contracts in the Pacific. Christian he was provided with contact information to contact USPS directly about the matter.

"Roughly two weeks ago I sent an email to United's responsible person, providing them with an update of changes since our previous discussions, indicated we had received Commuter Authority from the U.S. Department of Transportation allowing us to operate scheduled flights to all the Mariana Islands, mentioned [that] our fleet of aircraft had increased since we last spoke, and explained that we now had a base of operations in Guam," he said.

In light of USPS' cost-cutting measures and the need for improved delivery times, Christian expressed confusion on the matter of a private company being responsible for administering contracts on behalf of USPS.

"I've located several regulations related to the bidding process when it comes to working directly with the USPS, but cannot locate anything related to what processes United would have to follow in subcontracting mail transportation to other carriers on destinations United doesn't serve [such as Tinian]," he said.

As an airline that relies on USPS for shipping aircraft parts and other items critical for the airlines operation, "we have a vested interest in seeing if we can do anything to improve the delivery times of the mail in the Marianas [but] I have not received any response from United..."

Star Marianas has not shipped any U.S. Mail to date and is still interested in future opportunities of assisting with the transportation of mail. He said any help in navigating through this unclear process is appreciated. He can be reached at schristian@starmarianasair.com or (670) 433-9989.

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UMDA, Wickline settle lawsuits

United Micronesia Development Association Inc. and its former president and chief executive officer David L. Wickline have reached a settlement to their legal dispute.

UMDA and Wickline, through their respective counsel Robert T. Torres and Colin M. Thompson, informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI on Friday about their agreement to drop all claims in their lawsuits. Both parties cannot re-open the case in the future.

The terms of the settlement agreement were not disclosed, but each party shall bear their own attorney's fees and costs.

Torres and Thompson asked the court to order the matter closed and take any and all future hearings off-calendar.

UMDA sued Wickline "to protect its shareholders from dilution of their interests in the company, to recover substantial damages that UMDA discovered during the course of its investigation, and to stop Wickline from working behind the scene to undermine shareholder confidence."

Wickline, however, countersued. The court consolidated the cases. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

165 new books available at JKPL

A total of 165 new books are now available at the Joeten Kiyu Public Library.

"We have books ranging from juveniles to young adults and adults," said Ray Deleon Guerrero of JKPL.

The new selection includes recommended readings such as *New Kids On the Block* biography or the *X-Men, Iron Man Fights Back*, *Pass Creek Valley: A Western Duo*, *The Confessions of Al Capone*, *The Alligator Man*, *Nerd Camp 2.0*, *Last One Home: A Novel, Gathering Prey*, *Memory Man*, *The Coconut Oil Miracle*, and new magazine issues.

Deleon Guerrero is inviting the public to check out their new inventory and for young readers to drop by and check out their new graphic novels.

JKPL also has a daily book sale.

"Our new collection of books will be appreciated by not only the regular patrons of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library but [also] by those who haven't visited the public library and have wondered what types of books and other items we release each month," he said. ***(Daisy Demapan)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Office closures for DNP today

The Disability Network Partners will be having professional development training on EEOC and Ethics today, Dec. 7, 2015. The following offices will be closed for this training: Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; Council on Developmental Disabilities; University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities out of the Northern Marianas College; CNMI Respite Care Program; and Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems Inc. All offices above will go back to regular working hours on Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2015. ***(DNP)***

Pohnpei voters urged to vote in runoff polls tomorrow

Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia is gearing up for its runoff election for the seats of governor and lieutenant governor, scheduled for tomorrow, Dec. 8. Acting governor Marcello Peterson is being challenged for the gubernatorial seat by FSM Ambassador to China, Akilino Susaya. In the race for the lieutenant governor's seat, former Pohnpei State Legislative Speaker Nelson Pelep is running against Reed Oliver. In the CNMI, all eligible Pohnpei voters are being asked to cast their ballots tomorrow, Dec. 8, at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan, Saipan. Voting starts at 7am and will close at 7pm. ***(PR)***

Cancer survivors, caregivers support meeting

All people facing cancer, their family members, and caregivers are invited to the next Commonwealth Cancer Association monthly support meeting on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015, starting at 5:30pm at the Chamolinian Room of the Hyatt Regency Saipan. Guest speaker will be Ms. Monie, a survivor. Topic: "Successful experience for survivors of cancer: How to take care of your health doing backyard gardening." To RSVP or for more information, call the CCA at 682-0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com or cca@ccamarianas.org. ***(CCA)***

Nominations open for Employer Support Freedom Award

The deadline to submit nominations for the 2016 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is on Dec. 31, 2015. Presented by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense office, the Freedom Award is the nation's highest honor presented to civilian employers for exceptional support of their National Guard and Reserve employees. ESGR encourages Guardsmen, Reservists, or family members acting on their behalf, to submit nominations at www.FreedomAward.mil. The Freedom Award ceremony is held in Washington, D.C., for up to 15 deserving employers each year in August. ***(ESGR)***

Military training at FDM, Warning Area 517

The U.S. military will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla during the following dates and times:

- Dec. 7-10, from 2pm to 10:30pm
- Dec. 11, from 10:30am to 10pm
- Dec. 12, from 10am to 10pm
- Dec. 13, from 10am to noon

The U.S. Coast Guard will conduct training at Warning Area 517 on Dec. 10-11, from 9am to 4pm

The general public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators are advised to stay clear of the areas during the dates and times indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 10-nautical mile radius on all quadrants.

W-517 is an irregular shaped polygon comprising of 14,000 nautical square miles of airspace that begins south of Guam and extends south-southwest in international waters. This will affect fishing in the vicinity of Santa Rosa Reef and Galvez Bank. ***(JRM)***

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MCS gives massive crowd a 'White Christmas'

Mt. Carmel School Theater Club veterans and *White Christmas* cast, from left, Michael Ortizo, Markel Toves, Cathryn Javier, director Jonathan Pangelinan, Brent Ortizo, Lance Deleon Guerrero, and Brianna Hunter pose for a photo after Saturday's production.
THOMAS A. MANGLONA II

By **THOMAS MANGLONA II**
CORRESPONDENT

Those wishing for a white Christmas this year had their dreams come true during Mt. Carmel School's musical adaptation of the holiday classic *White Christmas* last Friday and Saturday at the Saipan World Resort in two nearly sold-out shows.

» School puts on 38th production in 20 years

The school club's 38th production in 20 years featured Christmas music and swinging jazz hits by the Guam Territorial Band. The band performed in the school's previous productions and will be celebrating its 40th anniversary next year.

The play's director, Jonathan Pangelinan, hopes that those in the audience felt the "joy and happiness that Christmas embodies and realize that it is not the gifts…that makes Christmas happy, but the people in our lives…"

"Everything about the play was perfect," he added. "I am very proud of the cast and crew and everyone who put this together."

With the success of this production, Pangelinan is already thinking of starting auditions for the school's next production, Disney's *The Lion King*, in May, which will conclude Mount Carmel's 20th anniversary celebration.

Erin Camacho, the original floor manager for the school's first *White Christmas* production in 1998, marveled at how the latest production incorporated changes to the script.

"It was new. They did a new take and made it more local and I really enjoyed that aspect of it," she said. "After all these years theatre continues to be a big benefit for everyone who becomes a part of it. I really enjoyed it."

Brianna Hunter, who portrayed the character of Betty Haynes, took the stage with fellow veteran Theatre Club members and lead actors Lance Deleon Guerrero, who played Bob Wallace, Markel Toves, who played Phil Davis, and Cathryn Javier, as Judy Haynes, in last week's play.

"I am actually happy, not because it's over, but because of the reaction of everybody and I just wanted to give everyone a happy Christmas," Hunter told *Saipan Tribune*. "Theatre Club changed my life because the people I work with become friends and later on they become family."

Board of Education representative Tanya King had nothing but high praise for the cast. "I know all of the players involved [in the production] and I am so incredibly impressed by the talent of our students from the CNMI and I know unequivo-

See MCS on Page 9

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Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold a Regular Meeting on Thursday, December 10, 2015, at 9:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Conference Room.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY
  A. Call to Order
  B. Roll Call
  C. Adoption of Agenda
  D. Adoption of Minutes
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS1
III. REPORTS
  A. Chair's Report
  B. Executive Director's Report
IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
  A. Re-opening of Tinian Dynasty Casino
V. NEW BUSINESS
  A. Petition of TEC for Declaratory Ruling re: ICA Emergency Regulations
  B. Petition of TEC for Declaratory Ruling re: Applicability of Regulation § 170-30.2-825
  C. Special Fee Assessment for 1st Quarter FY2016 compliance
  D. Special Fee Assessment for 2nd Quarter FY2016
  E. Proposed Regulations re Investigative Fee Deposit Trust Account
  F. Section 53 Penalty Waiver granted to HKE and failure of condition
  G. Consideration of ED Recommendations & Commission Actions re: Licensing Matters for:
    1. Casino Service Industry License Applications
      a) Silver Heritage Limited ("SHL")
      b) International Casino Service Limited ("ICS")
      c) Tinian Trading International, Inc. ("TTI")
    2. Casino Employee License/Registration Applications
      a) TDHC employees/consultants
VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION2
VII. MISCELLANEOUS/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
VIII. ADJOURNMENT

[1] Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

THE ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE REPORT

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) would like to inform the general public that the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice report is available for public review.

The report can be reviewed at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Central Office, NMHC Field Offices in Tinian and Rota. The report is also available online for review at www.nmhcgov.net.

Written comments regarding the report should be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. Monday, December 14, 2015 to NMHC's offices in Saipan, Tinian, or Rota. You may also submit your comments via email at nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp.

If you may have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Planner/Environmental Officer at (670)234-6866/7689.

NMHC will make necessary arrangements for persons with disabilities. If you should require any special accommodations please contact our office.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION
December 18, 2015

Notice is hereby given, that pursuant to **loan documents**, the Commonwealth Development Authority ("CDA") shall auction off to the highest bidder **used airplane, parts and accessories and airline operation supplies.**

The auction shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:
1. The items are being sold **"AS IS"** and **"WHERE IS"**;
2. The items are being sold **WITHOUT WARRANTY** of any type;
3. The public auction will be held at the **CPA Freedom Air Hangar on Friday, December 18, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.**;
4. Terms of the sale are cash, certified check or credit card (Visa and Mastercard only; a 2% fee will be charged on credit card transactions); and
5. CDA reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to withdraw this notice and postpone the sale from time to time.

CDA is attempting to collect a debt and any payments received will be used for that purpose. Any interested party or person may contact Ms. Abby Atalig or Ms. Marie Coleman, Loan Officers, CDA at 234-7145 extensions 304 and 307 for further information. Inspection of items will be announced at a later date. Failure to inspect the property will not constitute grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer. All sales are final.

Dated this 25th day of November, 2015

Commonwealth Development Authority
/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

Tinian International Airport
Car Rental Concessions
CPA-RFP-006-16

Request for Proposals

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting proposals for the award of four (4) Rental Car Concessions at the Tinian International Airport.

Proposal packages can be obtained beginning November 3, 2015 at the CPA Administration Office, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport at a fee of $50.00 per package.

Proposals must be addressed to the Executive Director, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and received by the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) on **December 11, 2015**, by or **before 12:00 p.m.**, in order to be considered for the award. All proposals will be publicly opened on December 11, 2015, at 3:00 p.m., at the CPA Conference Room.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject proposals in accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations.

MARYANN Q. LIZAMA
Executive Director

Benjamin Taisacan Manglona
International Airport
CPA-RFP-007-16

Request for Proposals

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting proposals for the award of two (2) Rental Car Concessions at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.

Proposal packages can be obtained beginning November 3, 2015 at the CPA Administration Office, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport at a fee of $50.00 per package.

Proposals must be addressed to the Executive Director, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and received by the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) on **December 11, 2015**, by or **before 12:00 p.m.**, in order to be considered for the award. All proposals will be publicly opened on December 11, 2015, at 3:00 p.m., at the CPA Conference Room.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject proposals in accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations.

MARYANN Q. LIZAMA
Executive Director

Main water pipe on road going up NMC ruptures

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers in Chalan Laulau are experiencing a temporary water service interruption resulting from a ruptured 16-inch water main under Chalan Monsignor Guerrero—the road going up to the Northern Marianas College in As Terlaje.

CUC water personnel discovered the line break when water began to seep out of the pavement along the innermost eastbound lane just below NMC. Both of the eastbound lanes are currently closed to traffic as crews excavate the site. Motorists are asked to avoid the area by using alternate routes, if possible.

CUC does not have an estimate for the restoration of water service to the affected area; however, crews will remain at the site until the repairs have been completed. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor CUC's Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(CUC)***

MCS

From Page 8

cally that they can go out in the U.S and make it big," she said.

Mount Carmel School president and production producer Galvin Deleon Guerrero continues to be "genuinely surprised" by the success of every show.

"When we started the Theatre Club it was just to put on one show. I never thought we would keep putting on plays," he said. "…It is surprising but also some ways not surprising because we have great kids that I feel really humbled and privileged to work with them."

MCS' performing arts program began in 1996. The school was also the first to have a concert band in the 1970s. Its annual Christmas program, which began in 1952, is the longest running performing arts program on island.

Mt. Carmel School president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, left, poses with members of the Guam Territorial Band before the start of the play last Saturday.

THOMAS A. MANGLONA II

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BSI hosts 'welcome back' banquet at Aging Center

The Man'amko Center banquet welcomes the return of the *man'amko* to the center. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Two months after providing shelter to those who lost their homes after Typhoon Soudelor, the CNMI Aging Center finally reopened its doors to more than 90 *man'amko* on Dec. 2, 2015.

To welcome the island's elderly back to the center, the Office on Aging collaborated with Best Sunshine International, Ltd. to host a "welcome back" party filled with delicious food, live entertainment, and fun activities.

Staff of Marianas Health Services was also present to carry out a health screening for the *man'amko*, which included checking their blood pressure and sugar levels.

"When the *man'amko* gave up their place for evacuees to use during Soudelor, it became a little rundown and uninviting. When they came back and finally got everything back to 100 percent, we thought it would be really nice for them to have a little welcome back party," said Best Sunshine lead coordinator Chandise Cooper.

Two of Best Sunshine's corporate social responsibility teams led by director Rita Chong and director Geri Dela Cruz helped plan the party.

Laughter and chatter filled the room as the *man'amko* lined up for food and socialized with the Best Sunshine CSR teams, sharing their experiences as part of the Man'amko Center and how they coped after Typhoon Soudelor. To welcome Best Sunshine's CSR team, each one was presented with a *mwar-mwar* as a sign of appreciation and gratitude.

Margarita A. Aldan, one of the current active registered clients of the Aging Center, said, "We're very happy to be back to the center and today, we're happy that they gave us a banquet when we came back. Thanks to Best Sunshine for this touching gesture and also for all their help."

Best Sunshine CSO Tao Xing, the CSR team, and the *man'amko* danced to the live in-house band composed of CSR members as well as a couple of *man'amko* who played the guitar and drums. Following lunch, the *man'amko* participated in various activities and were given Christmas-themed prizes for participating in all the fun.

Walter Manglona, director of the Aging Center, said that having the elderly back at the center "means a great deal."

"To have Best Sunshine voluntarily host such an event is very surprising that in such a short time, they were able to come up with something like that," he added. "From the bottom of my heart, I want to say thank you very much, Best Sunshine. You guys have been awesome, you guys have been extremely generous."

The CNMI Aging Center, also known as the Man'amko Center, was built in 1974 and was created to be a place where the elderly could socialize with one another and participate in various activities meant to strengthen each other's independence.

Shortly after the destruction of Typhoon Soudelor that left many on Saipan without shelter, the Man'amko Center became a temporary safe haven for those without running water and electricity. ***(PR)***

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Owner Asking Price

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-16-002

Typhoon Soudelor Disaster Recovery Project - CUC Central Warehouse Repairs

The Office of the Executive Director of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for repairs at CUC Central Warehouse in Lower Base, Saipan. As this project is time sensitive, contractors shall ensure that they have a good understanding of the project prior to making their bid proposal to avoid protracted contract discussion that will result in a successful expedited contract award to the selected Offeror.

The Scope of Work and Solicitation Package will be emailed upon request, by CUC Procurement & Supply Office from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, except on government observed holidays, **until December 15, 2015**. Prospective proponents for this RFP must register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division no later than 2:00 p.m. on December 15, 2015 in order to be considered.

A **mandatory Pre-proposal Conference** will be conducted at the Warehouse Building in Lower Base, Saipan on **December 15, 2015 at 10:00 a.m., ChST.** Immediately after the conference, Site Visits to Warehouse facility will be arranged. Proposers shall familiarize themselves with the site conditions prior to submitting the proposal.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC Central Warehouse Repairs, CUC-RFP-16-002" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **December 31, 2015 at 10:00 AM,** local time. Submissions, in PDF, must also be emailed to the addresses as noted in the RFP. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A Proposal Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total proposal price must accompany the proposals. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or proposal bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. *A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful Proposer. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying

labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Proposers are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Proponents are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proponents due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of proponents' preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract.

Proponents shall be accorded fair and equal treatment. There shall be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proponents.

This Request for Proposal does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals in anticipation of a contract. This request and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page: https://marianaslabor.net/. The proponents shall be required to comply with all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 a.m. local time on **December 21, 2015,** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer, CUC P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950 via email: manny.sablan@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Assistant, Procurement Division via email: marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org CUC will respond to any questions and clarifications only to prospective proposers who have registered for the solicitation with CUC procurement division.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the Request for Bid in the interest of the Corporation. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

JOHN RIEGEL
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Customer Appreciation Raffle 2015

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Have we had our fill of mass shootings yet?

Have you had enough yet? Are you fed up?

The murderous rampage in San Bernardino, Calif., on Wednesday, where 14 people were killed and at least 21 injured, was not only horrific, it was the second mass shooting of the day. It followed an incident in Savannah, Ga., in which one person was killed and three were injured.

The country was still processing the carnage at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, Colo., on Friday in which a gunman killed a police officer and two civilians and wounded nine others. And again, there had already been another mass shooting that day, in which two were killed and two were injured in a restaurant in Sacramento.

The Washington Post reported that there were at least 351 mass shootings—defined as an incident in which at least four persons are killed or injured by gunfire—in the first 334 days of the year, citing data from a Reddit community that tracks mass shootings.

In reporting the San Bernardino massacre, the BBC opened its coverage by saying: "Just another day in the United States of America, another day of gunfire, panic, and fear."

Britain, Australia, Japan and other countries have the gun violence problem under control. This country, sadly, does not. Guns are expected to surpass car crashes for the number of American deaths caused in 2015. In 2013, the last year for which National Center for Health Statistics data is available, 33,636 Americans were killed by guns—homicide, suicide, accidental discharge—versus 33,782 fatal crashes.

Still, the San Bernardino shootings may have nudged the debate a small step forward: Many, including Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., called out the "thoughts and prayers" response as meaningless and, for those taking money from the National Rifle Association, hypocritical. Sen. Murphy tweeted:

"Your 'thoughts' should be about steps to take to stop this carnage. Your 'prayers' should be for forgiveness if you do nothing—again."

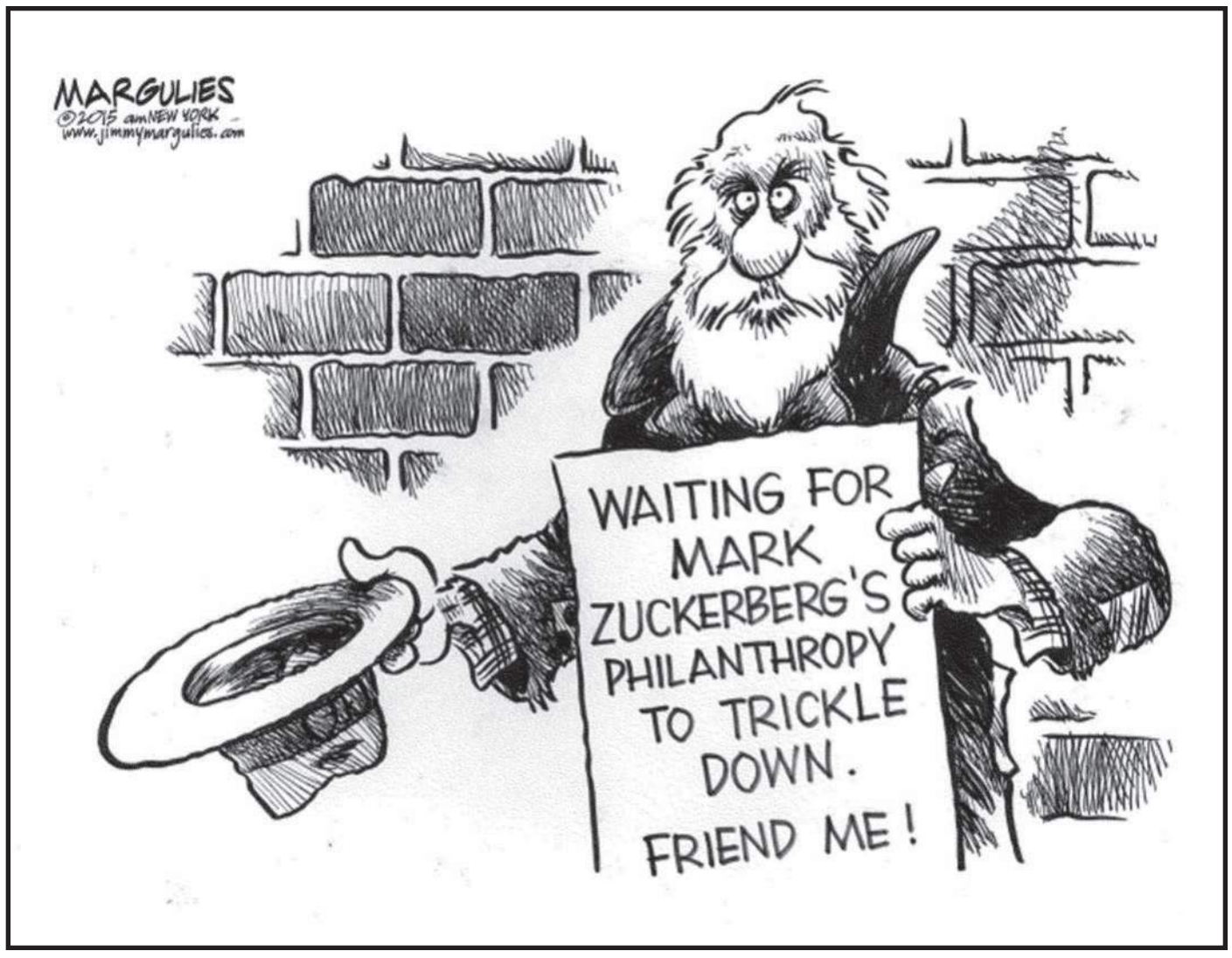
Point well taken. Sending thoughts and prayers to the families of the victims and the brave first responders has become a hollow sentiment that achieves very little, rather like rounding up the usual suspects.

The U.S. leads the civilized world in gun ownership and mass shootings, backed by the anachronistic Second Amendment, and it will take a long time to change. But as Mark Kelly, husband of former congresswoman Gabby Giffords, who was nearly killed by a loon with a gun, said on Thursday, we can enact common-sense measures such as universal background checks and antitrafficking laws to lessen the problem.

The trick is to get Congress to act. You can, if you chose, join or support organizations that are working for sensible national gun laws. You can support candidates—here and in other states—who support sane gun laws. If you own guns, you can make sure they are properly secured.

(c)2015 *The Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Conn.)

See EDITORIAL on Next Page



World Climate Challenge

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.

COP21 is the UN's acronym for the summit, reminiscent of the street-smart term for the NYC police force, the cops. The Convention on Climate Change, or the Climate Change Conference as Triple C would be just as bland, but then, we have Triple J on Saipan, so maybe Triple C will have some folks thinking about obsolete fossil fueled cars and get the young to look into inexpensive new hydrogen-based chemical processes that is causing Aramco headaches.

Climate change joins conservatives and progressives together in common cause, save that some GOP members of Congress claims that funding climate change is wasteful of taxes. As seemingly innocuous as an issue as this global condition, we do have "denyers" and "naysayers" in high government positions that think the excessive carbon contents in our skies are illusions.

Of course, we know that Obama on the lead at the Paris Summit is the magnet for the negative political response. With the Senate slapping the "O" on the face with intents to dismantle Obamacare, the GOP seems to be more anti "O" than anything else!

Among the climate change villains, China is said to lead the pack since its amount of emissions is at par with the U.S. Uncle Sam allegedly cleaned up its act more than a decade ago along the Allegheny and the Appalachia, thus a river by Cleveland no longer bursts into flames. Never mind that per capita, China will not list on the top 10 even though the U.S. moved production and manufacturing to China when Zhou En Lai and Kissinger got cozy, particularly on light metals used in info tech hardware, the field that fuels Western economy, so China is more intent in the full fruition of its economy in 2030 rather curbing the use of its abundant coal for fuel.

Deng Xiao Peng opened the economic gates to the cheap labor of the Heavenly Realm and western investments poured into manufacturing; the land of the Han has not been the same ever since.

But now China worries of pollution as well. Coal, the source of energy for foreign-fed factories on domestic production, adds to the particle matter index in the air. Smog made Beijing close shop last week.

So, it did not come as a surprise that China gets the major finger of blame in the Paris Summit of Nations on Climate Change, nor did it help that Beijing's air has been on the heavily polluted side.

A clear selling point of China tours to Saipan is the quality of air in the CNMI. A guest who stayed for a month away from freezing *Dong Bei* developed colds on his last two days, revealing a reflex to want to stay longer. He could have but his visa was only good for 31 days and the hassle of extending his stay required visits to authorities that we really did not wish to do. Besides, he needed to face the truth that inhaling pm 2.5 in Liaoning does not add or deter being profoundly human!

The bureaucratic approach to dealing with a situation like global warming is to pass laws, add more policies in the books "to be legally binding," but in the U.S. where the President's hands are constitutionally at the mercy of the Senate, it really does not amount to much.

On Saipan, the popular mandate was to refrain from letting casinos establish on the island, as Dynasty on Tinian and the one-armed bandits in every village on Saipan were sufficient to whet the gambling appetite. So much for public law!

The change of tourists from Japan and Korea to the game-of-chance and fortune seeking *Zhongguoren* that our casino tables hope to lure, with Macau (Aomen) revenue down by 33 percent when Beijing curbed the illicit siphoning of public funds into the gaming tables, the integrated resort practice started in Singapura to make casinos look acceptable is used as a convenient rationale to turn the CNMI into the Las Vegas of the Far East. Ironically, Las Vegas is itself diversifying its economy beyond gambling as the native population in the U.S. uses their rights to run casinos on reservations, limiting Las Vegas' allure. Turning Saipan, Tinian and Rota into the new gambling capital of the world is very attractive to the landowners of the CNMI.

Two referenda that defeated casinos on Saipan are to naught. Similarly, warming is a verifiable reality, and the non-biodegradable fossil fuel byproduct plastic in its minute particle form has permeated our oceans and our air, our food and body systems.

It will not be the summit that makes the difference but ordinary humans who decide to consider alternative energy source, even if the media propaganda promotes oil as "that without which we could not do without."

Saipan can lead the way of showing that alternative energy is an option. The casinos might just be the means to show that this can be done. Generous with their PR funds, wind turbines and solar panels can show benefits when used, and now, the new universal fuel that might just make oil obsolete. Integrated resorts might show how their structures keep islands air clean. Breath easy.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Lawmakers and the breadfruit initiative

Lawmakers have been touting the need to develop another industry to help provide jobs and create a sustainable future. But when an opportunity to pursue a new industry—albeit a much smaller scale than tourism—presents itself, they turn a blind eye, develop amnesia, or appropriate a measly $600 to help develop a CNMI Breadfruit Program that many of them earlier vowed to support.

Gov. Eloy S. Inos, who has been advocating a breadfruit program, submitted to the Legislature a $60,600 funding request for the CNMI's Breadfruit Program's "startup" in the fiscal year 2016 budget. The House of Representatives initially approved the governor's $60,600 requested funding. But the Senate drastically reduced it to $600, even as it increased legislative leadership funding to $300,000, took away some funding for tourism, and allowed for additional government hiring, among other things.

When the deadlock was broken between the House and Senate, the resulting compromise budget bill reflected the Senate's $600 funding for the breadfruit initiative.

Days later, the Senate rewarded their Saipan colleagues with a $2,500 monthly subsistence allowance. That's $30,000 a year. Multiply that by three for three Saipan senators. Tinian and Rota senators each has a monthly subsistence allowance of $5,000 or $60,000 a year. Multiply that by six for six Rota and Tinian senators.

What's more, two senators are current/former members of the CNMI Breadfruit Initiative Team. Sen. Sixto Igisomar (R-Saipan) became a member when he was still Commerce secretary, while Sen. Arnold Palacios (R-Saipan) became a member when he was still Department of Lands and Natural Resources secretary.

It is not unreasonable to expect that at least Igisomar and Palacios would champion the cause of the breadfruit initiative in the Senate or the whole Legislature, knowing the potential of a breadfruit industry. It was disappointing to say the least that they voted to scrap the breadfruit program of needed money, except for $600.

A breadfruit program is taking off in other parts of the region. The CNMI has started planting breadfruit trees, and workshops held by Hawaii experts for those in the CNMI interested in cultivating breadfruit trees and exporting them. But the CNMI program needs so much more in funding support; much more than the $600 that the Legislature was able to come up with.

The CNMI needs to take the lead because of its quota-free clause in the Covenant and the Jones Act. These put the CNMI "in a better position" to ship out breadfruit.

Gov. Inos has been promoting the breadfruit initiative for three fundamental reasons: 1) the fiber content is known to combat noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension (the humble fruit is a superfood); 2) it's for food security for every village or family; and 3) it has a billion-dollar potential for gluten-free flour and the sap, according to breadfruit experts from Hawaii, is currently valued at $1,000 per gallon.

It was in 2013 when the Inos administration kicked off the breadfruit initiative. In a brief ceremony, Inos marked the event by leading the transplanting of Ma'afala breadfruit plantlets, touting the breadfruit's potential to help fuel the local economy. The governor also formed a Breadfruit Initiative Task Force led by Ivan A. Blanco, who at the time was with the Office of Grants Management, and now press secretary.

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Haidee V. Eugenio covered politics, mmigration, environment, business and other news beats as a reporter for Saipan Tribune *and other news media in the CNMI for 16 years.*

Inos himself said in 2013 that the demand for gluten-free food source such as breadfruit has picked up, and the CNMI—where breadfruit is a staple—is seeing its economic potential.

That was days after the House of Representatives adopted House Joint Resolution 18-12 by a vote of 17-0, expressing support in diversifying the CNMI's economy by developing breadfruit flour as a value-added agricultural export product.

Perhaps Igisomar, Palacios and most of their colleagues at the Legislature can still redeem themselves and practice what they preach—that of looking for ways to develop new industries, create jobs so people can feed themselves, and boost the local economy—by appropriating startup funds for the breadfruit program via the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation chaired by Rep. John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan).

Let us see whether lawmakers, who are prompt in funding road repairs, fishing derbies, bus shelter stops, basketball courts and buying lawnmowers would also see the importance of helping a potential industry get off the ground.

While CNMI tourism is doing okay these days compared to previous years, and the Saipan casino's supposed "live training facility" just held its grand opening, it doesn't hurt to pursue another industry that will complement tourism.

Hopefully, elected officials on Capital Hill would stop believing that a Saipan casino, charging tourists additional fees or legalizing marijuana for medicinal use are the only ones to complement tourism, boost the economy and cure all of the CNMI's financial woes.

EDITORIAL

From Page 12

San Bernardino shooting shocking, yet almost normal

Elementary schools. College campuses. Churches. Military bases. Movie theaters. Health clinics. And now a center in California that helps children and adults with developmental disabilities.

It seems there's no place safe from mass shootings.

We still don't know everything about what happened inside the sprawling Inland Regional Services center in San Bernardino on Wednesday morning.

We know that at least 14 people are dead and that at least 17 others were injured. We know that three people are to blame and that police shot at least two of them dead—one male, one female. We know they arrived in a dark-colored SUV, had explosive devices and entered the building carrying long guns.

This wasn't a lone, mentally disturbed gunman intent on wreaking havoc, which is something that—and this says nothing good about Americans—we've somehow come to grasp. But this was something else. Something scarier.

San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan made that clear at a news conference Wednesday afternoon. The shooters, he said, "were dressed and equipped in a way that indicates they were prepared. ... They came prepared to do what they did, as if they were on a mission. They came in with a purpose."

While the FBI was reluctant to call it terrorism, what happened at Inland Regional Services was terrifying. But so are all other mass shootings.

No matter what you call it, though, the root of the problem is the same: America allows too many guns to fall into the hands of too many people who shouldn't have them. It's one reason we have the dubious distinction of leading the world in mass shootings.

As President Barack Obama said: "The one thing we do know is that we have a pattern now of mass shootings in this country that has no parallel anywhere else in the world, and there's some steps we could take, not to eliminate every one of these mass shootings, but to improve the odds that they don't happen as frequently."

Several Republican presidential candidates said they were praying for the victims and their families. Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton took a different tack: "I refuse to accept this as normal." Her words echo Obama's after the country's last mass shooting, less than a week ago at a Planned Parenthood in Colorado Springs, Colo. "This is not normal," Obama said. "We can't let it become normal."

Sadly, for many Americans, these shootings, these acts of domestic terrorism, have become just that. Normal. Today, every school kid knows what "an active shooter situation" means. Employees do drills in drab office buildings so that they know what to do when and if the time comes.

We should be thankful that law enforcement, paramedics, hospitals and others reacted quickly, the way they have been trained after so many similar incidents across the country. They almost certainly saved lives. But it's still a troubling commentary on our times.

Changing this dangerous level of acceptance of our new normal will require doing all of the things we already know we must do. Stricter gun laws, better services for the mentally ill and summoning the political willpower to do both.

(c)2015 *The Sacramento Bee* (Sacramento, Calif.)

Gun debate goes nowhere as Americans grow increasingly isolated

The gun debate is loathsome. First, the debate becomes most heated in the immediate aftermath of senseless gun violence, which lately has come about all too often. The same questions are raised on cable news, and the same guests are brought back to retell the all-too-familiar sides of the debate.

Secondly, the so-called debate is not really a debate but rather a reaffirmation of entrenched points of view on either side. Nowhere is that discussion more evident than on social media, where any suggestion of the need for changes in our gun laws is likely to be met by an avalanche of posts emphatically defending Second Amendment rights—or vice versa.

Finally, politicians on both sides pander to those ingrained views to strengthen their credentials on this issue. The effect of which is to discourage them from actually engaging in a meaningful dialogue that could potentially lead to more deliberative public policies.

In sum, the modern-day gun debate has become highly politicized and polarized. A polity that is inherently suspicious of each other's motives blocks avenues for any type of accommodation toward a middle ground. Thus, time and time again, the debate is rehashed but never substantively evolves.

The gun debate is a symptom of the decline of social capital. In his book, "Bowling Alone," Robert Putnam referred to social capital as "the collective value of all 'social networks' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other." Putnam attributed declining levels of civic engagement to the increasingly insular lives of Americans. In other words, rather than join bowling leagues, Americans were more likely to bowl alone.

There are troubling signs that this trend continues. A 2010 Pew Research Center survey found that 28 percent of American adults did not know their neighbors by name and only 29 percent knew some of their neighbors. Books like "The Vanishing Neighbor" and "The Village Effect" raise concerns about the unraveling of neighborhoods. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics noted a 10-year low in the volunteer rate in 2013, (25.4 percent) compared with 2003 (29 percent).

By JONATHAN C. ROTHERMEL
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Jonathan C. Rothermel is a professor of political science at Mansfield University in Mansfield, Pa. He wrote this for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Although social media can be wielded to harness community awareness and facilitate collective action, it is more likely to feature and celebrate the individual user's best qualities. The potential interactive features of social media often succumb to a mere platform for individualized expressions.

The loss of human empathy that would be gained through interpersonal relationships with one another inhibits our ability to connect deeper. Shallow "friendships" on Facebook are poor substitutes for cultivating genuine social relationships, and the lack of engagement with others beyond our families spawns distrust. The irony is that, in a world that is "uber" connected, many in our society feel isolated and insecure.

The decline in social capital creates a society that is less likely to be understanding of opposing points of view. It is much easier to be recalcitrant with someone who you do not know very well. Our computer monitors shield us from the social awkwardness of an uncivil exchange. Furthermore, vulnerable individuals are likely to get lost in the wide cracks of societal apathy.

As a country we have a lot more in common than we realize, but lately, it seems like we have a tendency to emphasize our differences. Building social capital can help us recognize those similarities, and from there we can find ways to work collaboratively rather than combatively to make our world a better place.

It will not be easy. But you can start by introducing yourself to your neighbors. Help to organize a community activity. Volunteer for a local outreach organization. Go to church. Or heck, join a bowling league.

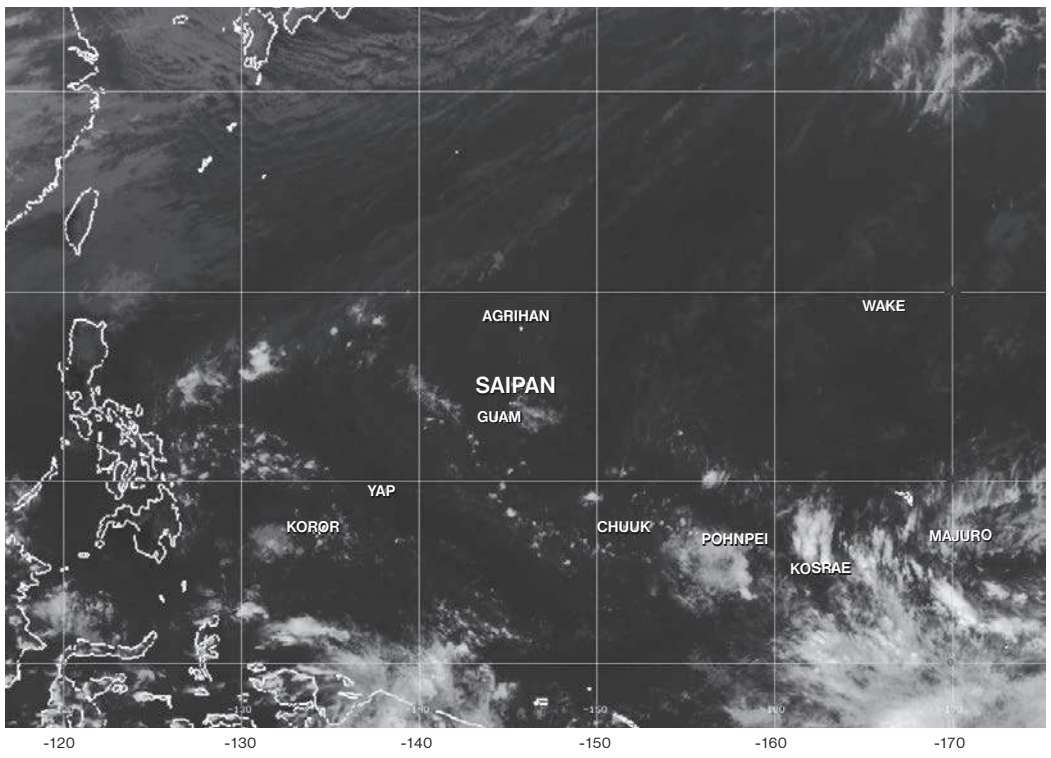
A shot of social capital is the remedy that our country needs to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends southwestward from northwest of Wake Island at 25N162E to beyond 130E at 16N. Cloudiness, patchy showers and a few thunderstorms are present along and up to 200 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough meanders eastward from south of Koror near 1N135E through two weak circulations centered south of Chuuk at 3N152E and southwest of Majuro at 3N168E then continues to beyond the date line at 2N. Isolated thunderstorms are seen north of the trough south of Koror and Yap within 70 miles of a line from 6N131E to 4N141E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring south of Chuuk and west of Majuro but over Pohnpei, Kosrae and Kwajalein within 170 miles of a line from E150E to 6N157E to 6N169E and east of Butaritari east of a line from 7N177E to EQ173E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Thundershowers	▲87	▼79
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲88	▼78
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲88	▼78
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼80
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼79
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼80
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼81

Around the Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲69	▼57
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲40	▼29
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲69	▼62
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲85	▼74
London	Partly Cloudy	▲57	▼51
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲78	▼53
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲91	▼76
Melbourne	Cloudy	▲89	▼70
Miami	Thundershowers	▲80	▼72
New York	Sunny	▲56	▼41
Osaka	Sunny	▲59	▼42
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲55	▼46
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲56	▼41
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲62	▼45
Salem	Showers	▲56	▼49
San Francisco	Showers	▲61	▼51
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲46	▼30
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲52	▼41
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲54	▼35

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:22 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
10:36 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.9 Feet
4:31 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
11:45 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Tuesday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Wednesday	6:31 AM	5:47 PM
Thursday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Friday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:43 AM	2:48 PM
Tuesday	3:31 AM	3:28 PM
Wednesday	4:20 AM	4:11 PM
Thursday	5:10 AM	4:57 PM
Friday	6:02 AM	5:45 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5072/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2924/159	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

PCF Class of 2015 holds culmination trip in Hawaii

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Pacific Century Fellows-Marianas Chapter Class of 2015 visited Pearl Harbor during their culmination trip to Hawaii last November. The class will be graduating in January.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Class of 2015 of Pacific Century Fellows-Marianas Chapter recently went on a trip to Hawaii as part of their nine-month program.

The four-day trip to Hawaii from Nov. 16 to 20 included a meeting and panel discussion at the East West Center where they met their Hawaii counterparts and discussed issues such as the environment, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as well as Trans-Pacific Partnership or TPP.

The class also met with the chancellor of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Dr. Robert Bley-Vroman. They also visited the Honolulu Rail Transit Project, Bishop Museum, the American Red Cross-Hawaii Chapter, USS *Chosin*, and Matson Navigation.

Tourism and culture were also discussed by various resource persons from the Hawaii Tourism Agency, Waikiki Improvement Association, and the state Department of Land and Natural Resources.

The tour was organized by former Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann, chairman and founder of PCF-Hawaii.

"It was a very informative session. Every single one of them was an excellent overview of the Hawaii economy, global issues, we talked about TPP, the global warming issues," PCF-Marianas Chapter vice chair Alex Sablan said.

The Marianas Chapter Class of 2015 is composed of Amanda Allen, Edward Arriola Jr., Mable Ayuyu, Alex Camacho, L.J. Castro, Michael Ernest, Jonathan Liwag, Judy Mendieta, Jaclyn Mendiola, and Mark Rabauliman.

According to Castro, the trip inspired him to do better with what he is doing right now as a public information specialist as well as the founder of the non-profit organization, Simiyan I Mañaina-ta.

"I enjoyed the experience. Definitely, our counterparts in Hawaii, they have a lot of insight to what they do and it opened our eyes to try and enhance our job, what we do for the community," Castro said.

"My favorite part was looking at how much traditional and cultural practices are used in the leadership," he added.

For Rabauliman, the experience was an eye-opener on the similar challenges that are being encountered in Hawaii and the CNMI.

"Being from Commerce, it was an eye-opener to the inner workings of how things are decided upon, what direction needs to be taken," Rabauliman said. "One of the visits that was very insightful was when we went to UH Manoa, how they decide what marketing strategies to fund, and what demographics, and how they're also pushing, just like NMC, to keep our students on island."

"We have a small island and hopefully some of the young minds that were part of this trip can come together and see how they can turn things around on our piece of paradise," he added.

Ayuyu said among the significant experiences she had was meeting and interacting with various professional leaders.

"I think that the 'one-on-one' interaction I had with them will help me professionally by helping me re-evaluate how I can be a more effective leader in my work and for my family business of McDonald's," Ayuyu said. "I also think that my encounter with the different leaders I've met on this trip will help me as a person by reminding me to remain humble in all that I do. They've taught me to approach projects with a passion for it."

"I'm grateful for this experience and it has given me some great ideas on how I can be a better leader for the islands I call home," she added.

The 2015 class will be having a graduation ceremony in January.

Culturing rabbitfish in the works for the CNMI

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Culturing rabbitfish will soon be pursued in the CNMI.

According to the Department of Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Richard Seman, the government will be pursuing the culturing of rabbitfish in coordination with the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research, Extension and Education Service.

"This will involve not just raising them but also spawning," Seman told *Saipan Tribune* in a recent interview.

Seman, who went to Iloilo, Philippines, said they were able to learn a lot about rabbitfish culturing.

"I just came from Iloilo, the Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center and we went to a one-week extensive training, and in that training we learned how to distinguish between the male and the female, how to pair them up, learn how to develop the algae, learn how to feed them better," he said.

Seman said rabbitfish is the most desired fish on the island, which is why they want to culture this specie.

"They also possess the most value per pound than any other species on island. Right now they sell at $4 a pound," Seman said.

He said the rabbitfish is valuable in all its three stages—from when they are very young until they mature.

"It doesn't matter what they stage they are, people have a craving for that fish," Seman said. "It is one of the few fish that has its own flavor."

Seman said they hope to obtain funding from the Department of the Interior for this project as rabbitfish is also affected by climate change.

"This is a species that can adapt, but it takes a while for them to adapt," Seman said. "By culturing it, we can control the environment to make their growth more ideal. The slight difference in temperature, it hinders their ability to spawn."

Remnants of power poles to be given away

A full accounting of the power poles damaged by Typhoon Soudelor has been completed and the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will begin disbursing the remnants of power poles today, Dec. 7.

After receiving numerous requests from government agencies and members of the community, CUC will begin disbursing the power poles' remnants at 12:30pm in Lower Base by following the waiting list compiled by CUC Warehouse personnel.

The remnants of power poles are free to the public, available in lengths of 3 to 12 feet, and limited in quantity to four pieces per person. CUC Warehouse personnel will be on hand to disburse the poles with the assistance of a forklift.

For more information about the power pole remnants or to have your name added to the waiting list, contact CUC Power Division by calling 664-7505 or 664-7517. ***(CUC)***

CHCC looking at giving H1B visas to some nurses

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Aside from looking at raising the pay of nurses, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is also looking at petitioning H1B visas for those who have been with the hospital for a long time now.

According to CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña, they are considering the option in order to retain staff.

"I'm hoping that they understand that there is value from a CW to H1B and that's what we want to do," she said.

Muña said part of the discussion in the adjustment of nurses' salaries is the option to obtain a different immigration status for them.

"The feedback that we got is just increase in salary and we're saying I think we can compromise on the salary and at the same time be able to tell you that you can be here for a certain time and eventually we may petition you to be a U.S. citizen," Muña said.

"That's an option that we'd like to, kind of, balance it out," she added.

However, Muna said they may not be able to do it for all the nurses. The hospital currently has 152 nurses, 127 of whom have CW permits.

"We already have some recommendations on some staff that should already be H1B," Muña said, noting also that they have some staff that already hold H1B visas.

The pay adjustment for nurses to make them salaried instead of hourly workers is still under discussion. Muna said they will have to have follow up meetings with the staff.

"It's going to take a little while, unfortunately," Muña said.

"We don't want to lose them but we also need to understand that we are obligated to comply with the law and the law is that I stay within my budget," she added.

WINNING ARTWORK
This art piece by 15-year-old Mount Carmel School student Joenelle Gwenyth Toskas developed using water-based colors, crayons, and ink won the Typhoon Soudelor inspired category of the Pacifica Art Contest held in October of this year.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nation

Woman in deadly California rampage had become more devout

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (AP)—A change came over Tashfeen Malik two or three years ago.

She started dressing more conservatively, wearing a scarf that covered nearly all her face, and became more fervent in her Muslim faith, according to some who knew her in Pakistan.

But her path from there to the bloody events of this past week—when she and her husband slaughtered 14 people in a commando-style shooting rampage—remains a mystery.

FBI officials, family lawyers and others said they know little about the 29-year-old housewife and mother, apart from what came to light on Friday: that Malik had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group on Facebook as she and her American-born husband, Syed Farook, 28, went on their rampage.

The turn in the investigation raised a host of questions, among them:

■ If the couple was radicalized, when, where and how did it happen? Were they influenced by Islamist material online or direct contact with extremists?

■ If it happened before Malik came to the U.S., did counterterrorism authorities miss any warning signs when they investigated her before approving her visa?

■ Which of them was the driving force in the attack?

AP

This undated combination of photos provided by the FBI, left, and the California Department of Motor Vehicles shows Tashfeen Malik, left, and Syed Farook.

Sources: OpenStreetMap, Mapbox, Times reporting
Graphic: Paul Duginski Los Angeles Times, TNS

"Malik seems to be a very nebulous figure," said Natana DeLong-Bas, an assistant professor of theology at Boston College. She said the case should cause people to rethink some of their assumptions about extremism.

"We always seem to assume only a man would be capable of making a terrorist attack," DeLong-Bas said. "Because we know so little about Tashfeen Malik, it's possible she might have been the main organizer in this event and talked her husband into doing it."

Husband and wife were killed in a furious shootout with police hours after they armed themselves with assault rifles and opened fire on a gathering of Farook's colleagues from the San Bernardino County health department, where he worked as a restaurant inspector. The FBI said it is investigating the rampage as a terrorist attack.

President Barack Obama plans to deliver a prime-time address to the nation Sunday night on the attack and the government's efforts to keep the nation safe.

Hundreds of FBI employees, meanwhile, are working the case, interviewing people, gleaning information off the Internet, conducting searches and analyzing evidence, bureau spokeswoman Laura Eimiller said.

Early Saturday, authorities with guns drawn raided a home next door to the house where Farook's family used to live in Riverside, California, breaking windows and using a cutting torch to get into the garage, neighbors said.

The FBI would not say what it was looking for, but a neighbor said an old friend of Farook's lives there. More than three years ago, that person bought the two assault rifles later used in the shooting, but authorities haven't been able to talk to him because he checked himself into a mental hospital after the attack, said a law enforcement official who was not allowed to discuss the investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Even in peaceful communities, Muslims feel more vulnerable

NEWBURGH, Ind. (AP)—As Bushra Saqib and her husband watched news reports about the mass killing in San Bernardino, California, they looked at each other with dread and said the same thing: "I hope it wasn't a Muslim."

Although Wednesday's rampage was almost 2,000 miles from this Ohio River town of about 3,300 near the Kentucky and Illinois borders, revelations that it was carried out by a Muslim couple felt like a blow to the years-long effort by the local Muslim community to dispel misconceptions that Islam condones violence.

"You get tired and overwhelmed defending your faith all the time; you feel like everybody's looking at you," said Saqib, who runs her husband's medical office in the small Illinois town of Carmi, about an hour west of Newburgh. "But you cannot feel defeated."

Muslim families in this southern Indiana hamlet are among those feeling more vulnerable as anti-Islamic sentiment heats up across the country in the aftermath of recent extremist attacks.

Here, they have found mostly peaceful coexistence at the edge of the nation's Bible Belt, forming friendly relations with the larger community by working hard to build trust. They began arriving about 30 years ago to take jobs as doctors, business owners, engineers and professors in the area around Evansville, Indiana's third largest city, many settling in this bedroom community known for antique shops, restaurants and nice houses lining manicured streets.

They host an annual food festival and give tours of the new Islamic center, which opened five years ago and serves about 120 families in the region. They help build Habitat for Humanity houses and volunteer at homeless shelters. They've forged friendships with Christian and Jewish congregations.

Still, they worry. Leaders have hired off-duty sheriff's deputies to safeguard their mosque during Friday prayers.

It's the same way they felt after 9/11, when someone rammed a pickup truck into their old Islamic center, shattering several windows.

Instead of hunkering down after that incident, they reached out. And they plan to keep doing so.

"Once they eat with you, they have a different idea of you," said Saqib, noting the annual food festival draws thousands and has raised more than $30,000 for a regional food bank.

Liberty president calls for an armed Christian campus

RICHMOND, Va. (AP)—Liberty University President Jerry Falwell Jr. urged students, staff and faculty at his Christian school to get a permit to carry a concealed weapon on campus to counter any copycat attack like the deadly rampage in California just days ago.

"Let's teach them a lesson if they ever show up here," Falwell told an estimated 10,000 of the campus community at convocation Friday in Lynchburg. While Falwell's call to arms was applauded, his remarks also seemed to target Muslims.

"I've always thought if more good people had concealed carry permits, then we could end those Muslims before they walked in .," Falwell said. The final words of his statement could not be clearly heard on a videotape of the remarks.

However, Falwell told The Associated Press on Saturday he was specifically referring to Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik, the husband and wife who shot and killed 14 people at a holiday party in San Bernardino on Wednesday.

Falwell's remarks generated a sharp rebuke from Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who called the comments "reckless."

"My administration is committed to making Virginia an open and welcoming Commonwealth, while also ensuring the safety of all of our citizens," McAuliffe said in a statement issued late Saturday. "Mr. Falwell's rash and repugnant comments detract from both of those crucial goals."

Falwell also said he believed the campus needed to be prepared in the face of the increasing frequency of mass killings. He cited, for example, the 2007 massacre of 32 people at Virginia Tech, the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history, and less than 100 miles southwest of Liberty.

"What if just one of those students or one of those faculty members had a concealed permit and was carrying a weapon when the shooter walked into Virginia Tech? Countless lives could have been saved," he said.

Falwell's message is apparently being heeded. He said more than 100 people had asked Liberty police about a free class to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

Liberty was founded by Jerry Falwell Sr., who was among the nation's first conservative cultural warriors. The Moral Majority founder's barbed commentary on contemporary matters such as gay Americans made him a reviled figure to some and a pioneering conservative crusader to others.

Chicago cops' versions of teen's killing at odds with video

CHICAGO (AP)—Police officers who watched a colleague shoot a black Chicago teenager 16 times filed reports depicting a very different version of events than what dashcam footage showed, portraying the teen as far more menacing than he appeared in the video.

The city released hundreds of pages of documents late Friday pertaining to the October 2014 killing of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald by Jason Van Dyke, a white police officer. Van Dyke was charged with first-degree murder last month, only hours before the department released the video under a court order, sparking protests and accusations of a cover-up.

The video, which the city kept from the public for more than a year, shows McDonald veering away from officers on a four-lane street when Van Dyke, seconds after exiting his squad car, opens fire from close range. The officer continues shooting after McDonald crumples to the ground and is barely moving. The video does not include sound, which authorities have not explained.

In the newly released police reports, several officers including Van Dyke and his partner described McDonald as aggressively approaching officers while armed with a knife. At least three other officers, including his partner, supported key details in Van Dyke's portrayal of events.

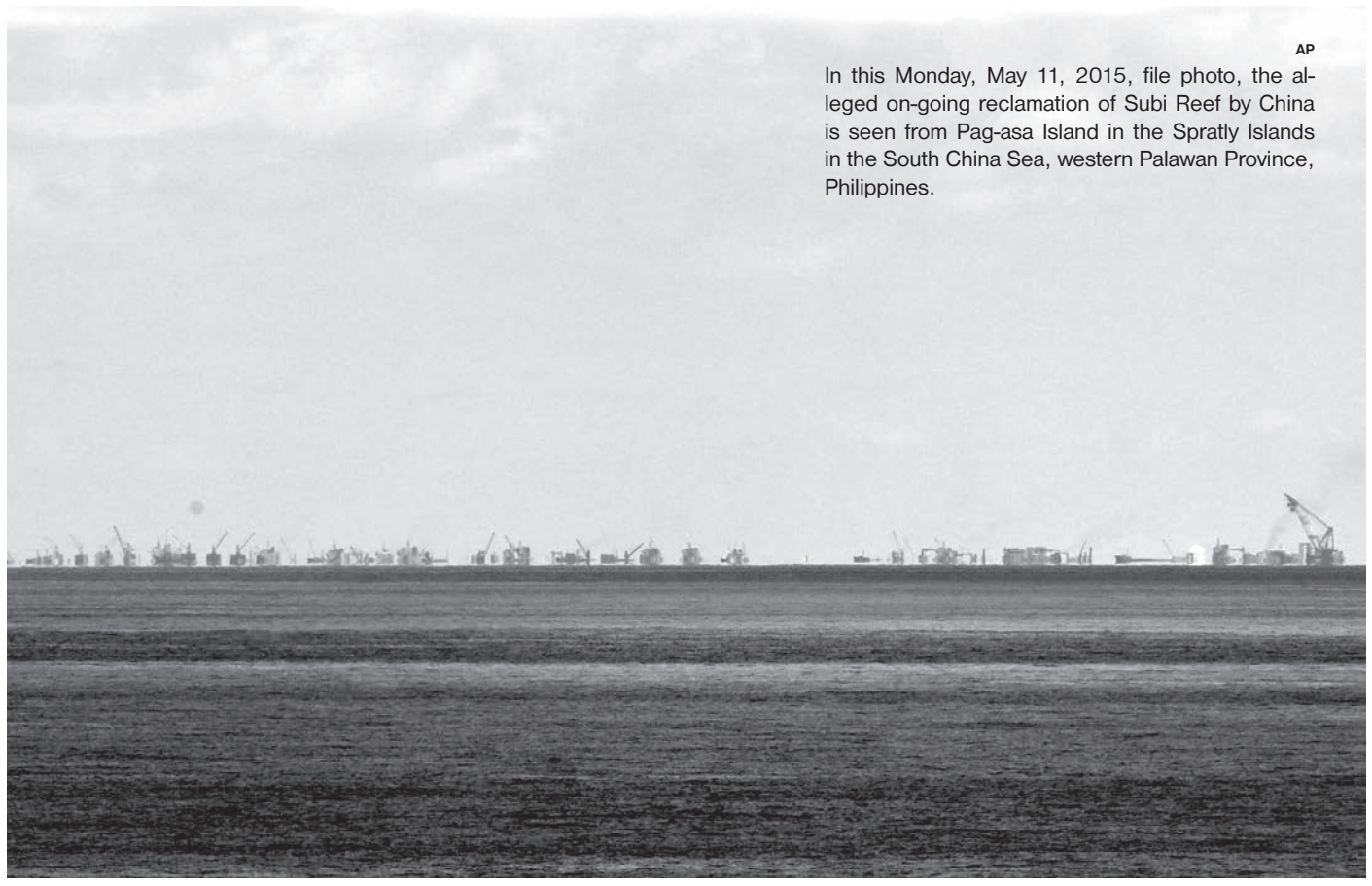
The officers' version, recorded in more than 300 pages of handwritten and typed reports, prompted police supervisors to rule at the time that McDonald's death was a justifiable homicide and within the use of force guidelines, even though the dashcam video also was available to them shortly after the shooting.

Van Dyke told an investigator McDonald was "swinging the knife in an aggressive, exaggerated manner" and "raised the knife across the chest" and pointed it at Van Dyke, according to one report. Multiple officers reported that even after McDonald was down, he kept trying to rise while holding the knife.

"In defense of his life, Van Dyke backpedaled and fired his handgun at McDonald, to stop the attack," one report reads. "McDonald fell to the ground but continued to move and continued to grasp the knife, refusing to let go of it."

Asia

New China airstrips a potential headache for neighbors, US



AP

In this Monday, May 11, 2015, file photo, the alleged on-going reclamation of Subi Reef by China is seen from Pag-asa Island in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, western Palawan Province, Philippines.

BEIJING (AP)—China's campaign of island building in the South China Sea might soon quadruple the number of airstrips available to the People's Liberation Army in the highly contested and strategically vital region.

That could be bad news for other regional contenders, especially the U.S., the Philippines and Vietnam.

The island construction work that is creating vast amounts of new acreage by piling sand on top of coral reefs is now moving into the construction stage, with buildings, harbors and, most importantly, runways appearing in recent months.

China now operates one airfield at Woody Island in the Paracel island chain, and satellite photos show what appears to be work on two, possibly three, additional airstrips on newly built islands in the Spratly archipelago to the east.

The bases could have a "significant impact on the local balance of power" by helping bolster the forward presence of Chinese coast guard and navy forces, said Euan Graham, director of the International Security Program at the Lowy Institute in Sydney, Australia.

As with most South China Sea developments, China has remained opaque about its plans for the island airstrips. At a recent monthly briefing, Defense Ministry spokesman Wu Qian declined to say how many China planned to build or what their purpose would be, repeating only that all military infrastructure was "purely for defensive purposes."

Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea and its islands and has created seven new features in the Spratlys since last year that are permanently above water totaling more than 800 hectares (2,000 acres) in area, according to satellite photos collected by U.S. government agencies and private groups including the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

While China insists its island building works are justified and don't constitute a threat to stability, further militarization of the region seems assured given China's increasingly robust assertions of its territorial claims.

Those perceptions were reinforced with the deployment in October of advanced J-11BH/BHS fighters of the navy air force to Woody Island that was revealed online in China in October. China's military has declined to comment on the reports.

The island's 2.4-kilometer (1.49-mile) long runway will soon be eclipsed by one more than 3 kilometers (10,000 feet) long on the reclaimed island built atop Fiery Cross Reef in the Spratlys, the satellite photos show. Another runway is being built on Subi Reef, with signs of similar work underway on nearby Mischief Reef.

Patrols by fighter jets based on the islands, most likely temporarily given the salty climate and frequent storms, could serve to intimidate other claimants, especially the Philippines and Vietnam. That could also complicate regular operations by U.S. forces which insist on freedom of navigation and overflight over the entire sea.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Commuter train hits passenger bus in Indonesia; 14 dead

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Police say a commuter train slammed into a passenger minibus at a railroad crossing in Indonesia's capital, killing at least 14 people and seriously injuring 10 others. Tambora neighborhood police chief Wirdhanto says the bus driver allegedly ignored the warning signals when he crossed the tracks and was rammed by the train in western Jakarta on Sunday. Wirdhanto, who like many Indonesians uses only one name, says 13 people in the minibus were killed instantly and another died in a hospital. He says the train was traveling from Jakarta to the neighboring town of Bogor with eight cars, and all train signals were working at the time of the crash.

2 Myanmar fishermen tell Indonesian court they were enslaved

TUAL, Indonesia (AP)—An Indonesian court has overruled defense objections and decided to proceed with the trials of five Thais and three Indonesians accused of human trafficking in connection with slavery in the seafood industry. The three-judge panel on Friday rejected arguments by defense lawyers that a government moratorium on foreign fishing boats was chiefly responsible for the stranding of hundreds of foreign fishermen, many trafficked or enslaved, on remote Indonesian islands. The defendants are accused of violating a law against people smuggling that carries a maximum prison sentence of 15 years and a fine of up to $46,000. The court heard testimonies Friday from two Myanmar fishermen, who said they had been tortured, forced to work up to 24 hours a day, and were not paid.

New Delhi announces special measures to fight air pollution

NEW DELHI (AP)—India's capital announced new measures Friday to fight extreme air pollution that has earned it the title of world's most polluted city. From Jan. 1, for several weeks, private cars will only be allowed on New Delhi's roads on alternate days, depending on whether their license plates end in even or odd numbers, said Kewal Kumar Sharma, the city's chief secretary. The city's pollution peaks during the cold winter months. The city also plans to shut down one of its oldest and least efficient thermal power plants. The Badarpur plant, commissioned in the early 1970s, uses outdated equipment and often breaks down. Traffic police will also be told to ensure that diesel-guzzling trucks, which transit through the city at night, enter only after 11 p.m. Currently trucks are allowed to enter the city at 9 p.m., often resulting in massive traffic jams. It was not immediately clear when the measures would take effect or exactly how long they would continue.

With lives at risk, Nepal struggles to escape dysfunction

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP)—Shiva Parwar has been camping on the pavement for five days, waiting in line for cooking gas. There are 521 gas cylinders ahead of his, and not even the dealer knows when more fuel will arrive, thanks to a two-month-long border blockade that shows no sign of ending.

"I sent my wife and child back to our village home because we don't have the gas to cook," said Parwar, whose roadside candy stall is shuttered while he waits. "I have been eating in restaurants with borrowed money but that too has run out. I have no option but to wait in line."

An ethnic group's blockade of a key border point with India is leaving Nepal with only about 15 percent of its normal supply of gasoline, diesel and cooking fuel, and creating shortages of other goods including food and medicine.

The group's dispute with the government is part of the political dysfunction that has held back development and even prevented the adoption of a constitution for nearly a decade. Now it is threatening lives as hundreds of thousands of people, many of them displaced by Nepal's devastating spring earthquakes, face the winter without fuel, secure housing and many essential goods.

"We are all suffering. Prices of food have gone up and there is shortage of many things here," Parwar said in Kathmandu, the capital. "It is the common people who are suffering. The rich and the leaders are getting the fuel and gas and living comfortably."

A look at Nepal's crisis through the eyes of those close to the dispute, and others who are struggling with its consequences:

THE MADHESIS' COMPLAINT

Members of the Madhesi ethnic group in south and southeast Nepal are blockading the border to protest Nepal's new constitution, which was adopted in September after years of infighting. The group wants a larger Madhesi province and more seats in Parliament than they have been given.

Madhesi protesters have clashed with police, attacked public vehicles and shut down highways. At least 50 protesters, police and bystanders have died in the violence.

Upendra Yadav, a leading Madhesi protest leader, blames the government for ignoring their demands and using excessive force to crush peaceful demonstrations.

"Just last week the government sent their goons to disrupt our mass gathering, burning down the stage and chasing our supporters," Yadav said.

The Madhesis have held talks with government negotiators at least nine times but have not reached any agreement.

"We are very clear with our demands," Yadav said, accusing the government of failing to present a clear agenda.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

The coalition government led by Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli took office after the protests began with promises it would resolve the conflict, but two months later, a solution is nowhere in sight.

The government has said it's ready to make changes to the constitution but has said little about protesters' demands for a bigger province. The Himalayan country has more than 100 ethnic groups, and while the Madhesi are among the largest, making up about a fifth of Nepal's 30 million people, there are fears that a deal to end the blockade could set off protests elsewhere.

"We fear that giving more land to the Madhesi province and making changes to the state boundaries could trigger new conflicts in the country," said Pradip Gyawali, secretary of the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist). Gyawali said any such changes would require detailed research and agreement among the main political parties.

Thai king, longest-reigning monarch, marks 88th birthday

BANGKOK (AP)—The people of Thailand on Saturday marked the 88th birthday of their king, the world's longest-reigning monarch, but with their once-vigorous leader in a hospital and unseen in public for three months, the celebrations were the most subdued in memory.

King Bhumibol Adulyadej looked frail on his last appearance before the general public on Sept. 1, when he was taken on a brief tour of the Bangkok hospital where he has spent most of the last six years. His most recent ailment was a lung infection that required him to be fed intravenously and use a machine to aid his breathing.

Many public activities were being held for the royal birthday, but there were no joyous celebrations of the type that used to be held before the decline of the king's health. One major gathering point this year was outside the hospital that has become his de facto palace, where well-wishers came to offer their prayers.

The king's other medical issues in recent years have included excess fluid in the brain and an operation to remove his gallbladder.

World

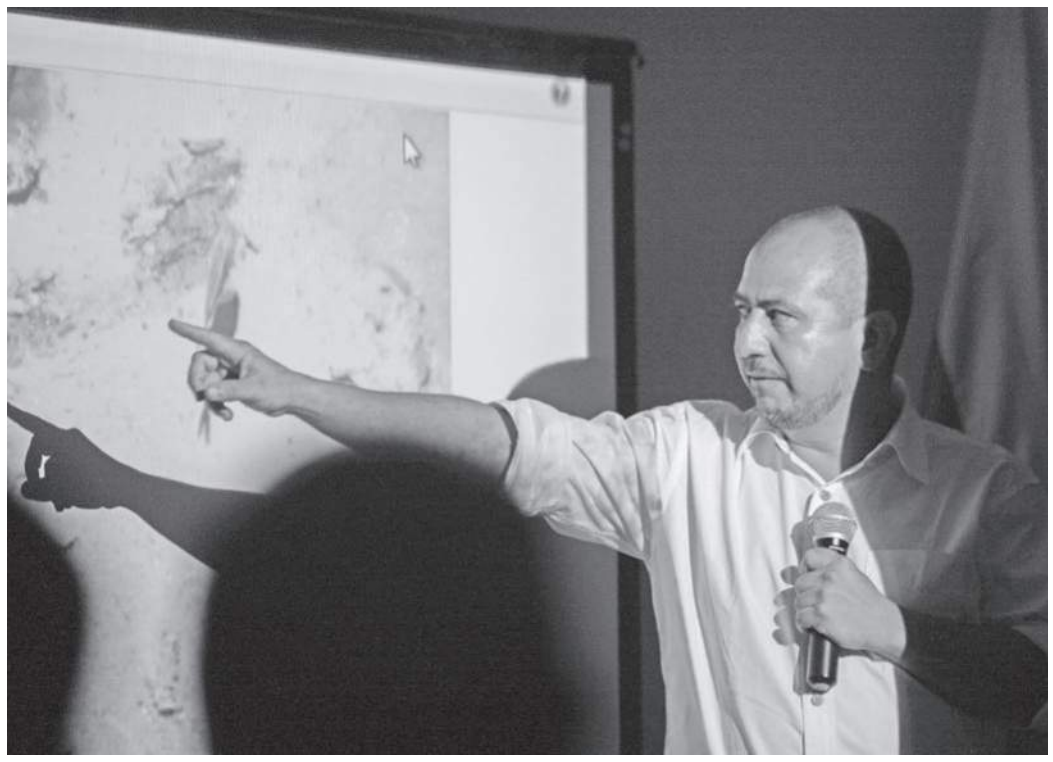
Colombia finds what may be world's largest sunken treasure

CARTAGENA, Colombia (AP)—President Juan Manual Santos on Saturday hailed the discovery of a Spanish galleon that went down off the South American nation's coast more than 300 years ago with what may be the world's largest sunken treasure.

At a news conference in this colonial port city, Santos said the exact location of the galleon San Jose, and how it was discovered with the help of an international team of experts, was a state secret that he'd personally safeguard. The ship sank somewhere in the wide area off Colombia's Baru peninsula, south of Cartagena.

While no humans have yet to reach the wreckage site, autonomous underwater vehicles had gone there and brought back photos of dolphin-stamped bronze cannons in a well-preserved state that leave no doubt to the ship's identity, the government said.

The discovery is the latest chapter in a saga that began three centuries ago, on June 8, 1708, when the galleon ship with 600 people aboard sank as it was trying to outrun a fleet of British warships. It is believed to have been carrying 11 million gold coins and jewels from then Spanish-controlled colonies that could be worth billions of dollars if ever recovered.



AP
Ernesto Montenegro, Director of the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History of Colombia, talks to the media while he shows a picture of remains of the Galleon San Jose during a press conference in Cartagena, Colombia, Saturday, Dec.5, 2015.

The ship, which maritime experts consider the holy grail of Spanish colonial shipwrecks, has also been the subject of a legal battle in the U.S., Colombia and Spain over who owns the rights to the sunken treasure.

In 1982, Sea Search Armada, a salvage company owned by U.S. investors including the late actor Michael Landon and convicted Nixon White House adviser John Ehrlichman, announced it had found the San Jose's resting place 700 feet below the water's surface.

Two years later, Colombia's government overturned well-established maritime law that gives 50 percent to whoever locates a shipwreck, slashing Sea Search's take to a 5 percent "finder's fee."

A lawsuit by the American investors in a federal court in Washington was dismissed in 2011 and the ruling was affirmed on appeal two years later. Colombia's Supreme Court has ordered the ship to be recovered before the international dispute over the fortune can be settled.

Santos didn't mention any salvage company's claim during his presentation, but the government said the ship had been found Nov. 27 in a never-before referenced location through the use of new meteorological and underwater mapping studies.

Danilo Devis, who has represented Sea Search in Colombia for decades, expressed optimism that the sunken treasure, whose haul could easily be worth more than $10 billion, would finally be recovered.

But he bristled at the suggestion that experts located the underwater grave anywhere different from the area adjacent to the coordinates Sea Search gave authorities three decades ago.

"The government may have been the one to find it but this really just reconfirms what we told them in 1982," he told The Associated Press from his home in Barranquilla, Colombia.

The president said any recovery effort would take years but would be guided by a desire to protect the national patrimony.

During his presentation, Santos showed an underwater video that appears to show jewels and the cannons. In the footage, English-speaking crew members aboard a Colombian naval ship can be seen launching the underwater vehicle into the ocean.

Messy midway: Paris draft climate deal ready, long way to go

LE BOURGET, France (AP)—Negotiators adopted a draft climate agreement Saturday that was cluttered with brackets and competing options, leaving ministers with the job of untangling key sticking points in what is envisioned to become a lasting, universal pact to fight global warming.

As the U.N. talks outside Paris reached their midway point, the 48-page draft agreement was sent along to environment and foreign ministers who will work on it next week.

"So let's work," French President Francois Hollande said in a speech Saturday. "It's up to the ministers and officials of every government to remove options, find compromises and make decisions on the difficult issues without undermining the ambition" of the climate pact.

Many disagreements remain, almost all related to defining the obligations and expectations of rich and poor countries, as well as those who don't fit neatly into either category. The draft had multiple options on that issue—everything from who should pay for a global transition to clean energy to what happens to countries that miss their targets to fight climate change.

One of the most radical proposals called for an "international tribunal of climate justice" to deal with wealthy countries that don't fulfill their commitments. Rich nations are certain to reject that idea.

"We would have wished to be further along than we are at this point, but the text being forwarded so far reflects our key priorities," said Maldives delegate Thoriq Ibrahim, who chairs an alliance of small island nations on the front lines of climate change.

Although 184 countries have already submitted national plans to reduce climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions, how to anchor those pledges in a legally binding deal remains to be worked out.

Chief Chinese negotiator Su Wei told reporters Saturday that "all the provisions, starting from the preamble to the final clauses, would be legally binding."

That contrasts with the U.S. position, which is for some parts to be legally binding, but not countries' pledges to limit the greenhouse gas emissions. Binding emissions cuts would likely require the Obama administration to send the deal to the Republican-controlled Congress, where it would likely be struck down.

At climate talks, African nations pledge to restore forests

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—Tree by tree, more than a dozen African governments pledged to restore the continent's natural forests at the United Nations climate talks on Sunday.

The earth has lost more than half its forests over the course of human history, according to the World Resources Institute. The deforestation of the world's tropical forests has contributed to climate change by producing up to 15 percent of global carbon emissions, the organization said.

The AFR100 initiative is a pledge by African nations to restore 100 million hectares (about 386,000 square miles) of forest by 2030, according to the organization.

"As the world forges a climate agreement in Paris, African countries—which bear the least historic responsibility for climate change—are showing leadership with ambitious pledges to restore land," said Andrew Steer, president and CEO of the World Resources Institute.

Wanjira Mathai, daughter of the late Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai, described the AFR100 forest restoration project as unprecedented.

"I have seen restoration in communities both large and small across Africa, but the promise of a continent-wide movement is truly inspiring," said Mathai, chairwoman of the Green Belt Movement founded by her mother. "Restoring landscapes will empower and enrich rural communities while providing downstream benefits to those in cities. Everybody wins. "

During the Global Landscapes Forum at the U.N. climate talks, the World Bank and the German government and other partners, set aside more than $1 billion in development funding and $540 million in private funding for the African reforestation.

More than a dozen African countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda, have pledged millions of acres to the project. West African nations along the Sahara desert have also pledged to plant more trees to stop the ever encroaching desert from destroying more arable land.

"Restoration is not just an environmental strategy, it is an economic and social development strategy as well," said Bright Msaka, minister of environment and sustainable development in Malawi.

Among the pledging countries is Madagascar, where the island forests are home to some of the world's most unique plants and animals, all under threat from deforestation. Satellite images of the island show forests that have been slashed and burned, according to the World Wildlife Foundation.

WORLD BRIEFS

UK police say stabbing treated as 'terrorist incident'

LONDON (AP)—A stabbing at a London Underground station is being treated as "terrorist incident," the London police said Saturday. The London police counterterror command said in a statement that it is investigating the incident at Leytonstone Underground station in east London in which a man was threatening people with a knife at around 7 p.m. (1900 GMT; 2 p.m. EST). One person sustained serious injuries and two other received minor injuries. One person was arrested. Police said a stun gun was used. "We are treating this as a terrorist incident. I would urge the public to remain calm, but alert and vigilant," said Commander Richard Walton, who leads the counter-terrorism unit. "The threat from terrorism remains at severe, which means that a terrorist attack is highly likely. Police appealed to anyone near the attack and who might have photos or video of the incident to contact police. The stabbing comes only days after Britain's Parliament gave overwhelming approval to authorizing the military to conduct airstrikes on Islamic State group targets in Syria. Several British newspapers reported that eyewitnesses to the incident said that the man shouted "This is for Syria," but police declined to comment on any reports.

Poland considers asking for access to NATO nuclear weapons

WARSAW, Poland (AP)—A Polish official says that the Defense Ministry is considering asking for access to nuclear weapons through a NATO program which involves non-nuclear states borrowing them from the United States. Tomasz Szatkowski, the deputy defense minister, said that the ministry is currently discussing whether to ask for access to NATO's so-called "nuclear sharing" program to strengthen the country's ability to defend itself. Polish media say Szatkowski's comments Saturday to the private broadcaster Polsat mark the first time a Polish official has said the country wants to join the program. The 28-member NATO has three nuclear powers, the U.S., France and Britain, but only the U.S. has provided weapons to allies for nuclear sharing. Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey have hosted nuclear weapons as part of the program.

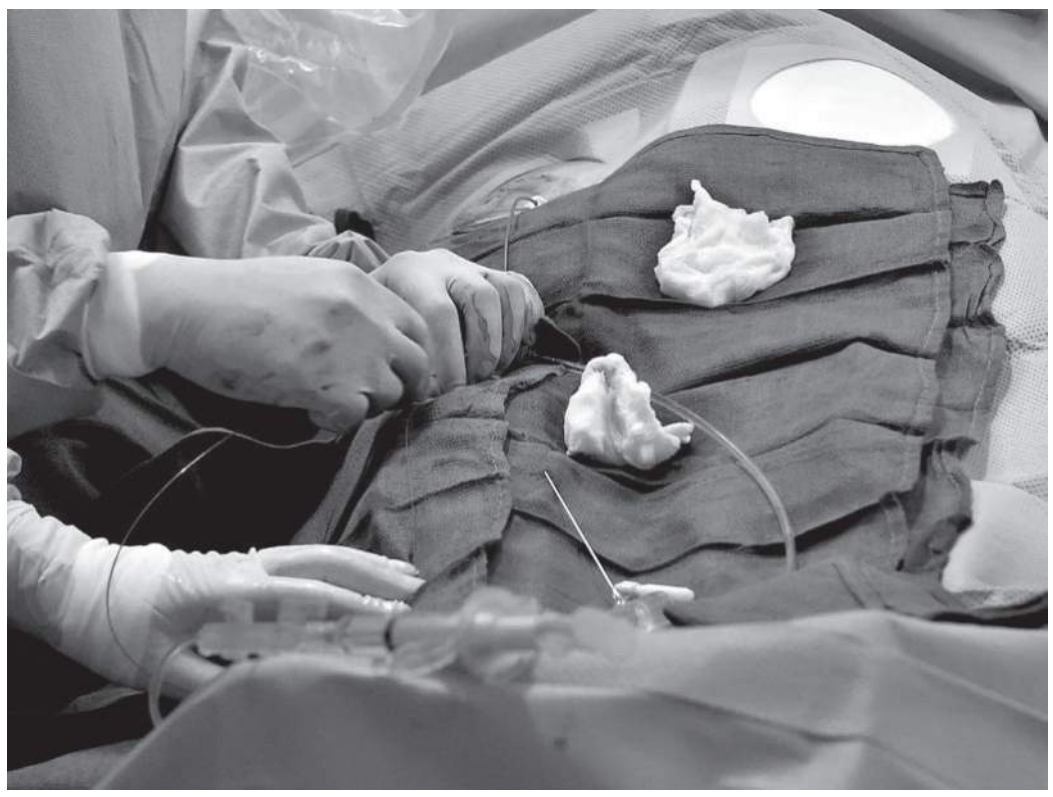
UK carries out 2nd airstrike against Islamic State oilfields

LONDON (AP)—Britain's defense secretary says U.K. fighter jets have targeted a Syrian oilfield during a second combat operation against the Islamic State group. Michael Fallon says the four jets from the British base in Cyprus bombed wellheads at the Omar oilfield in eastern Syria. Late Friday's operation, which aimed to cut off the militants' oil revenues, followed a similar strike the day before. The bombing began hours after British lawmakers voted Wednesday to expand Britain's air campaign against IS in Iraq to Syria. Fallon told military personnel in Cyprus: "We are going to use force against them in the headquarters, their command and control, their logistics, but also in the infrastructure that supports them." He says the fight against IS will not be "either short or simple."

Health & Fitness

As evidence mounts, fewer doctors perform unnecessary angioplasties

By ALAN BAVLEY
THE KANSAS CITY STAR



A coronary stent is deployed through the femoral artery of a patient with a blocked artery at Saint Luke's Mid America Heart Institute on November 25, 2015. Unnecessary angioplasties have declined in recent years.
JILL TOYOSHIBA/KANSAS CITY STAR/TNS

When clots block your heart arteries, you have a heart attack. So it only makes sense that an angioplasty to widen your narrowing arteries before you have a heart attack should prevent it from ever happening and even save your life.

Plenty of patients, and even some heart specialists, still think so. But study after study has been showing that the conventional wisdom is wrong _ in most cases, the operation won't protect you from a future heart attack.

The mounting evidence, along with new treatment guidelines, has been causing a quiet revolution in the treatment of coronary heart disease, shifting patients away from angioplasty in favor of medications, exercise and better diets.

A study published last month in the Journal of the American Medical Association finds that the number of elective angioplasties has fallen by a third in just five years. That mean tens of thousands of people are avoiding a procedure that may have done them little or no good but that costs on average $27,000 and may require years of drug therapy to avoid complications.

Meanwhile, a second new study in the New England Journal of Medicine finds that even after 15 years, patients who chose medication and lifestyle changes over angioplasty were no more likely to die than those who chose the procedure.

"This is a good news story," said John Spertus, a cardiologist and researcher at St. Luke's Hospital Mid America Heart Institute and a co-author of both studies. "It's positive for patients and for society at large that is paying for their care."

It's also been a long time coming.

Angioplasty was developed in the late 1970s, a time when doctors thought that heart attacks occurred when cholesterol deposits progressively narrowed coronary arteries, the critical vessels that supply blood to the heart muscle, until they shut off blood flow completely.

During angioplasty, a cardiologist snakes a thin tube, called a catheter, into a coronary artery and then inflates a tiny balloon at the catheter's tip to push back the deposits on the interior wall of the artery. As the technology advanced, tiny metal mesh tubes called stents were added to the procedure. They're left in the arteries to keep them open.

Angioplasty has been amazingly successful at relieving the chest pains, called angina, caused by reduced blood flow to coronary arteries. When performed during a heart attack, angioplasty quickly clears blockages to prevent damage to heart muscle and potentially saves lives. That's made it the gold standard for emergency heart attack treatment.

BY THE NUMBERS

- $27,000: Average cost of an angioplasty
- $155,000: In additional health care costs for every angioplasty patient who experienced a significant reduction in frequency of chest pains

The popularity of angioplasty grew fast. Eventually, cardiologists were performing 600,000 or more per year. Angioplasty became one of the top 10 contributors to health care costs, according to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, racking up expenditures of $10 billion last year.

Pimples, not plumbing

But from the start, doctors wrongly assumed that the angioplasty done to relieve angina also would make heart attacks less likely by preventing narrowed arteries from closing off entirely.

"I think the faith in angioplasty comes from thinking of the heart as a plumbing problem," said Cleveland Clinic researcher and physician Michael Rothberg.

It was persuasive, to both physicians and patients, to liken coronary artery disease to kitchen pipes clogging up with fat, Rothberg said. Angioplasty was the drain-cleaning snake that would clear out the blockage and set things right.

But from 1987 to 2007, a dozen or more studies consistently found that while angioplasty could relieve angina in patients with stable heart disease, it didn't prevent future heart attacks.

As it turns out, most heart attacks occur at places inside arteries where cholesterol deposits appear so mild they wouldn't be an obvious target for angioplasty.

These are deposits that become inflamed and then burst, precipitating a heart attack. This inflammatory model represents current thinking among cardiologists. So now, rather than using plumbing analogies to describe what happens, Rothberg said, doctors should be making comparisons to pimples.

When those "pimples" on artery walls pop, they cause blood in the arteries to clot, he said. If the clot closes off the artery completely, it causes a heart attack.

Even as evidence of the limitations of angioplasty grew, cardiologists kept recommending it, even to patients with mild angina that could be relieved with medication.

"It turns out doctors are people and have all the flaws of humans," Rothberg said.

"They know in an intellectual way that (the studies) are true, but that doesn't mean they know it in an emotional way. ... The fact that they're paid for (angioplasty) and paid well doesn't make it easier for them to think the other way."

And when cardiologists recommend angioplasty, patients have been quick to agree.

"It's scary to have a blockage in your heart," Rothberg said. "If someone says they can fix it, it sounds like a good idea."

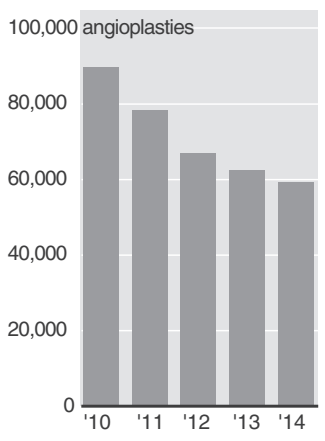
Higher cost, little if any benefit

By 2007, the angioplasty wave was about to crest.

The initial report of a landmark study called Courage (an acronym for Clinical Outcomes Utilizing Revascularization and Aggressive Drug Evaluation) was published in April that year in the New England Journal of Medicine. Spertus was among the researchers.

Fewer angioplasties

The number of non-emergency angioplasties has dropped by a third, according to a survey of 766 hospitals.



Source: Journal of the American Medical Association
Graphic: The Kansas City Star, Tribune News Service

The study followed 2,287 patients with stable heart disease at Veterans Affairs and private hospitals in the U.S. and Canada. These patients experienced angina during physical exertion or times of stress. But rest or medications quickly relieved their pain.

Half the patients received medical therapy that included drugs to relieve chest pain and to lower their blood pressure and cholesterol levels. They also were urged to exercise, lose weight and quit smoking. The other half got the same medication and lifestyle counseling plus angioplasty.

In a series of journal articles, the Courage researchers reported:

In the time the patients with stable heart disease were followed _ an average of about 4 {years _ there was no significant difference in the rates of death, heart attack or stroke among those who received medical therapy alone and those who had an angioplasty and medical therapy.

Angioplasty did a better job than medical therapy alone at reducing angina and improving quality of life, but the differences were very small. A fifth of patients who started on medical therapy alone opted for an angioplasty within three months. But in most cases, for patients who received angioplasty first, most advantages of the operation disappeared after six to 24 months.

The advantages of angioplasty were so slight that the procedure could not be considered cost-effective, the researchers concluded. For every angioplasty patient who experienced a significant reduction in frequency of chest pains, there was an extra $155,000 in health care expenditures.

One of the new studies, published in the New England Journal of Medicine this month, took a further look at about half the Courage patients. It found that over an average of about 12 years, and for as long as 15 years, the two groups of patients have maintained essentially the same death rates.

Slow evolution

After the Courage study came the first set of criteria for using angioplasty appropriately.

A 17-member expert panel convened by the American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association and other professional societies agreed in 2009 that angioplasty was clearly called for when patients were experiencing heart attacks or unstable heart disease with more frequent or severe episodes of angina.

But the panel was skeptical of performing the procedure on patients who were free of symptoms or had been offered little or no medication for their angina.

Two years after that, a national database of heart procedures began providing its more than 1,000 participating hospitals with information on the appropriateness of their angioplasties, allowing them to compare their rates to those of other hospitals.

Spertus and his St. Luke's research colleague Paul Chan, who also is a cardiologist, crunched two years of that data in 2011 and found that among patients experiencing heart attacks or unstable angina, nearly 99 percent of the angioplasties were appropriate. But among nonemergency patients, nearly 12 percent of the angioplasties were clearly inappropriate, meaning that the benefits of the procedure were unlikely to outweigh the risks. Their findings made headlines across the country.

It really frustrates me how long it takes for scientific evidence to reach the bedside.

John Spertus, cardiologist and researcher at St. Luke's Hospital At many hospitals, the practice of angioplasty started to change, and fast, the data from the new Journal of the American Medical Association study show. While the number of procedures done for emergency patients remained stable, elective angioplasties started to plummet, dropping every year from 2011 through 2014. The percentage of angioplasties considered inappropriate was cut in half.

"There is a more thoughtful process for doing angioplasty now than five years ago," said Chan, also a co-author of that study.

Chan thinks a combination of factors precipitated the rapid drop in angioplasties. The Courage study and those that followed played a role. So did the appropriate-use criteria and the data supplied to hospitals. And there was greater scrutiny from insurance companies that didn't want to pay for unnecessary procedures.

"If you were a hospital administrator and had insurance companies on your back, you darn well didn't want to be on the bottom" for appropriate angioplasties, he said.

In any case, cardiologists should take pride, Chan said, in having changed their practices so quickly in a positive way.

"I would be very encouraged," said Patrick O'Gara, immediate past president of the American College of Cardiology and clinical cardiology director at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. "The field has been evolving in a very positive way. We're trying to hold ourselves to a higher standard."

But that evolution has been a very slow process, Spertus said.

"It really frustrates me how long it takes for scientific evidence to reach the bedside," he said.

Spertus is thrilled that the American College of Cardiology developed the criteria for angioplasties and provided database reports to hospitals, but many cardiologists who perform angioplasties are still skeptical about Courage's findings.

"I think they want to believe they were saving lives."

Life & Style

Ex-Stone Temple Pilots frontman Weiland dead at 48

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. (AP)—Scott Weiland, the magnetic former frontman of the Stone Temple Pilots whose three-decade career in music also included solo albums and a spot in the supergroup Velvet Revolver, has died. He was 48.

The singer's manager, Tom Vitorino, confirmed the death to The Associated Press early Friday morning. Vitorino referred to a statement on Weiland's Facebook page that said the singer died in his sleep while on a tour stop in suburban Minneapolis.

Police said investigators found small amounts of cocaine on Weiland's tour bus, though a cause of death hasn't been released. The singer had been dogged by substance abuse problems throughout his career.

Weiland's former Stone Temple Pilot bandmates—Eric Kretz and brothers Dean and Robert DeLeo—released a statement Friday thanking Weiland "for sharing your life with us."

"Together we crafted a legacy of music that has given so many people happiness and great memories. The memories are many, and they run deep for us," the statement read. "We know amidst the good and the bad you struggled, time and time again. It's what made you who you were.

"You were gifted beyond words, Scott. Part of that gift was part of your curse. With deep sorrow for you and your family, we are saddened to see you go. All of our love and respect. We will miss you brother."

In this Nov. 24, 2008, file photo, singer Scott Weiland poses before signing copies of his new album, "Happy in Galoshes," in Los Angeles. AP

Weiland rose to fame as the frontman of Stone Temple Pilots, which became one of the most commercially successful bands to come out of the early 1990s grunge rock movement. The band's 1992 debut album, "Core," was an insta-hit and sold 8 million units. The hit single "Plush" won the Grammy for best hard rock performance.

The band's follow-up was a white-hot success, too: 1994's "Purple" hit the No. 1 spot on the Billboard pop charts, sold 6 million copies and launched the hits "Interstate Love Song" and "Vasoline."

Stone Temple Pilots released more successful albums before they broke up in 2003, and Weiland went on to front Velvet Revolver, the group that featured former members of Guns N' Roses, including guitarist Slash, bassist Duff McKagan and drummer Matt Sorum, as well as Dave Kushner of Wasted Youth. Among that group's hits was "Fall to Pieces" and "Slither," which won the Grammy for best hard rock performance.

The Stone Temple Pilots reunited in 2008.

"The story's not finished," Weiland told the AP at the time. "There's more to be revealed and more to be told."

But the group split again in 2013. Linkin Park's Chester Bennington took over as lead singer for Stone Temple Pilots but announced he was leaving the group last month.

Police said Weiland was found dead in a bedroom on his tour bus in Bloomington, a city just south of Minneapolis. Police said they found a small amount of cocaine in Weiland's bedroom and elsewhere on the bus, and arrested a California man who was traveling with him on tentative drug possession charges.

The local medical examiner was investigating Weiland's cause of death.

Weiland's current band, Scott Weiland & the Wildabouts, had been scheduled to play a show in nearby Medina, Minnesota, on Thursday night, but it had been canceled a week earlier due to poor ticket sales.

Mark Raskob, general manager at the Medina Entertainment Center, said Weiland's show was canceled after fewer than 100 tickets had been sold for it in a venue with a capacity of about 1,800.

Raskob said he was "bummed out."

"The guy has just been battling addiction and it's sad to hear that he passed," Raskob said.

Scott Weiland & the Wildabouts released the album "Blaster" in March. A guitarist for the band, Jeremy Brown, died at his home in Venice, California, a day before the album's release.

Weiland's wife, Jamie Weiland, also confirmed his death to the Los Angeles Times.

"I can't deal with this right now," she said, sobbing. "It's true."

Weiland had a long string of drug- and alcohol-related arrests and stints in rehab. In 1995, he was arrested after deputies found him carrying crack and heroin. He pleaded guilty to felony heroin possession in 1998. And his arrests for drug possession and stints in rehab led the Stone Temple Pilots to cancel tour dates and contributed to their 2003 breakup.

Robert Loggia, movie and TV tough guy, dies at 85

By JAKE COYLE
AP FILM WRITER

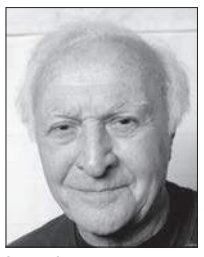
Oscar-nominated actor Robert Loggia, who was known for gravelly voiced gangsters from "Scarface" to "The Sopranos" but who was most endearing as Tom Hanks' kid-at-heart toy-company boss in "Big," has died. He was 85.

Loggia's wife Aubrey Loggia said he died Friday at his home in Los Angeles after a five year battle with Alzheimer's. "His poor body gave up," she said. "He loved being an actor and he loved his life."

Hanks expressed his grief on Twitter.

"A great actor in heart and soul," Hanks wrote. "A sad day."

A solidly built man with a rugged face and rough voice, Loggia fit neatly into gangster movies, playing a Miami drug lord in "Scarface," which starred Al Pacino; and a Sicilian mobster in "Prizzi's Honor," with Jack Nicholson and Kathleen Turner. He played wise guys in David Lynch's "Lost Highway," the spoofs "Innocent Blood" and "Armed and Dangerous," and again on David Chase's "The Sopranos," as the previously jailed veteran mobster Michele "Feech" La Manna.



Loggia

It was not as a gangster but as a seedy detective that Loggia received his only Academy Award nomination, as supporting actor in 1985's "Jagged Edge." He played gumshoe Sam Ransom, who investigated a murder involving Glenn Close and Jeff Bridges.

Loggia gave an endearing comic performance in Penny Marshall's 1988 "Big," when he danced with Tom Hanks on a giant piano keyboard.

Hanks played an adolescent granted a wish to be big, overnight becoming a 30-something man who -- still mentally a boy -- eventually finds work at a toy company run by Loggia's character. A chance meeting in a toy store leads to the pair tapping out joyful duets of "Chopsticks" and "Heart and Soul" on the piano keys built into the floor.

Loggia also appeared in five films for comedy director Blake Edwards, including three "Pink Panther" films and the dark comedy "S.O.B." He also portrayed Joseph, husband of Mary, in George Stevens' biblical epic "The Greatest Story Ever Told."

Asked in 1990 how he maintained such a varied career, he responded: "I'm a character actor in that I play many different roles, and I'm virtually unrecognizable from one role to another. So I never wear out my welcome."

In 1966 Loggia had the rare opportunity for stardom, taking the lead role in the NBC television drama "T.H.E. Cat."

Nicki Minaj's brother arrested on NY child rape charges

MINEOLA, N.Y. (AP)—Nicki Minaj's older brother has been accused of raping a child younger than 13 several times between April and November.

Jelani Maraj, 37, of Baldwin, was arraigned Thursday in a Long Island hospital on charges of first-degree rape and first-degree sexual conduct against a child, a Nassau County court official said. He was arrested on Tuesday but suffered an unknown medical condition that required him to be arraigned two days later at Nassau University Medical Center.

It was not immediately clear if Maraj entered a plea, but he was released on $100,000 bail. His New York City attorney did not return repeated telephone calls seeking comment on Friday.

Investigators wrote in court documents that the victim was younger than 13 and that Maraj raped the child several times. Some details in the court documents were blacked-out by a judge.

A spokesman for the district attorney's office declined to comment on the allegations.

Minaj, who won two American Music Awards last month for favorite artist and album-rap/hip-hop, did not immediately comment through a representative.

Minaj, who was raised in nearby Queens and turns 33 next week, attended her brother's wedding last summer on Long Island, according to numerous media reports.

Casinos could see guitar-playing, car-racing, and card-grabbing

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Consider them the concept cars of casinos.

Whether it's shooting down enemy planes, strumming a guitar-shaped controller to hit the right notes or swiping a table-top screen to grab the best set of cards first, the latest slot machines are looking a lot like an arcade. And that's what some in the industry are betting will attract younger players to the casino floor to revive gambling revenues that have sagged in recent years.

Until their September debut at the Global Gaming Expo, or G2E, in Las Vegas, it wasn't entirely clear what "skill-based slots" might look when Nevada lawmakers and gambling regulators opened the door to games requiring little or a lot of skill rather than simply random number generated chance.

For the legacy, big brands, including IGT and Scientific Games, the changes meant adding bonus rounds to their traditional slot machines, such as actually playing "Space Invaders" in between watching spinning reels. For a new "The Simpsons" slot machine, it meant the chance to physically scratch a lottery ticket during a virtual trip to the Kwik-E-Mart or catch handfuls of virtual doughnut sprinkles via a motion sensor capturing your own hands doing the scratching and catching.

It was the younger, smaller upstart companies that went further, offering up arcade-style games and more action per-square-foot, including Nano-Tech's take on "Pac-Man" and pinball, G2 Game Design's version of "Guitar Hero" or GameCo's 30- to 60-second racing and shooting games.

At least one upstart gamemaker, California-based Gamblit, expects its games to be a road-ready reality next year after final regulations are passed by the state and the games are tested.

Some remain skeptical of the spending power of younger gamblers, including the chief of design for slot machine maker Scientific Games who said that his company wasn't ready to invest half of its research and development budget in games appealing to millennials.

"To be honest with you, they don't spend that much money," Allon Englman said. "I don't know who's paying for those $3,000 bottles," he said about the pricey bottles of liquor sold at reserved tables at Las Vegas nightclubs.

Elad Dory, 27, may not be buying $3,000 bottles but he said he spent about $1,000 on video game consoles, games and mobile game apps in the last year.

The mobile game designer from Israel wearing a hoodie and sipping a beer, was strumming a guitar on the floor of G2E testing out a "Guitar Hero" style video game from G2 Game Design.

"I don't come to Vegas to gamble," he said. But he said he wouldn't mind paying 50 cents or more, depending on how bored and drunk he might be, to play something like that even if he didn't win.

Caitlyn Jenner sued by family injured in traffic crash

Jenner

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A family who suffered serious injuries in a fatal traffic collision involving Caitlyn Jenner earlier this year sued the Olympic gold medalist on Friday.

The Wolf-Milesi family of Malibu sued Jenner in Los Angeles Superior Court for negligence in the February crash, which killed one woman after Jenner rear-ended her car and pushed it into oncoming traffic on the Pacific Coast Highway.

A sport utility vehicle driven by Peter Wolf-Milesi family struck a car driven by Kim Howe, killing her. The lawsuit states the four members of the Wolf-Milesi family and another occupant of their vehicle sustained serious injuries in the crash.

Peter Wolf-Milesi suffered serious wrist injuries and his one-month old son was unresponsive after the accident, according to the lawsuit. Wolf-Milesi's wife also sustained blunt-force injuries and requires ongoing treatment, the suit states.

"The emotional effects of being involved in a collision that has taken the life of another has caused tremendous distress and suffering for the Wolf-Milesi family," the suit states.

Jenner's publicist Alan Nierob declined comment Friday.

Sheriff's investigators determined Jenner was traveling at an unsafe speed for the traffic conditions. Prosecutors declined to file a vehicular manslaughter charge against the 66-year-old Jenner, who was born as Bruce Jenner.

The accident occurred before Jenner announced she is transgender and transitioned into her new identity as Caitlyn.

After the accident, Jenner released a statement expressing sympathy to those involved in the accident.

"It is a devastating tragedy," the statement read. "I cannot pretend to imagine what this family is going through at this time. I am praying for them."

Jenner is also facing separate lawsuits by Howe's stepchildren and the driver of the other car involved in the collision.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Colts owner picks up Ringo Starr's drum set at auction

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Jim Irsay is reuniting the Beatles piece by piece. The Indianapolis Colts owner made his latest pricey purchase Friday, picking up Ringo Starr's first Ludwig drum set at auction for $1.75 million. "Finally, after 45 years, the Beatles are together again," Irsay said in a text message to The Associated Press. Irsay owns prominent guitars from the group's other three members—Paul McCartney, the late George Harrison and the late John Lennon. Earlier this year, Irsay also purchased a drumhead that will fit the set he just bought. Irsay is a huge music fan and an avid collector. He owns roughly 30 famous guitars, including instruments used by Bob Dylan, Jerry Garcia and Eric Clapton. In 2001, Irsay paid $2.43 million for the original manuscript of Jack Kerouac's "On the Road." Known as "the scroll," it's a continuous, 120-foot scroll tracing paper sheets that the author cut to size and taped together.

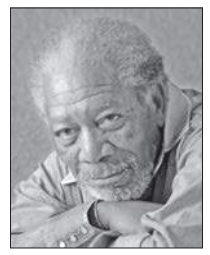
Rare pressing of Beatles' White Album sells for $790,000

NEW YORK (AP)—A rare pressing of the Beatles' White Album from Ringo Starr's record collection has sold at auction for $790,000. Julien's Auctions says an anonymous buyer made the purchase Saturday at a sale in Beverly Hills, California. The mono pressing was the very first in the United Kingdom of the 1968 album. The auction house said the White Album sale smashed a record set in 2015, when Elvis Presley's first acetate recording sold at auction for $300,000. It followed a sale on Friday of one of Starr's early drum kits for $2.2 million to Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay. The two-day auction included over 800 items owned by Starr and his wife, actress Barbara Bach. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the couple's Lotus Children Foundation.

'Buffy' actor pleads guilty in NY after arrest over fight

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. (AP)—An actor who starred in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" has pleaded guilty to criminal mischief after he was accused of choking his girlfriend in an upstate New York hotel room. The Albany Times Union reports that Nicholas Brendon pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor charge Friday in Saratoga Springs. Police said the 44-year-old Brendon grabbed his girlfriend by the throat, took her keys and tossed her cellphone during a Sept. 30 fight. Prosecutors say he will not serve jail time in the latest case if he completes drug and alcohol counseling and stays out of trouble for one year. Defense attorney Peter Coseo tells the newspaper his client is working to "get his life back together." Brendon played Xander on "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." He also has appeared on "Criminal Minds."

Actor Morgan Freeman is unhurt after plane's unexpected landing


Freeman

TUNICA, Miss. (AP)—Morgan Freeman says he was aboard his plane when it had to make an unexpected landing in Mississippi, but nobody was injured.

Mayor Bill Luckett of Clarksdale, a longtime friend of the actor, confirms the plane made a controlled forced landing before dark Saturday. Freeman released a statement saying he was headed to Texas to shoot a segment for the series "The Story of God."

He says, "Sometimes things don't go as planned and a tire blew on takeoff, which caused other problems." But he said they "landed safely without a scratch." He says he can't say the same about his plane.

Luckett says Freeman and the pilot were aboard the flight that originated in Clarksdale, and another plane was en route to Tunica, the landing site, to pick Freeman up.

Kim Kardashian West, Kanye West welcome son

AP
In this Monday, June 1, 2015, file photo, Kim Kardashian, left, and Kanye West arrive at the 2015 CFDA Fashion Awards at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, in New York.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The newest member of the Kardashian clan has arrived.

Kim Kardashian West and Kanye West welcomed a baby boy early Saturday in Los Angeles.

"He's here!" the reality star teased on Twitter. An announcement on Kardashian's website reads, "KANYE AND I WELCOME OUR BABY BOY!"

A representative for the couple confirms to The Associated Press that mom and baby are doing well. There was no immediate word on the baby's name.

Kardashian West has tracked her pregnancy online for her 37 million Twitter followers, posting an image late Friday of her bare belly with the caption, "Ready whenever you are lol."

This is the second child for the stellar couple: Daughter North was born in 2013.

Kardashian, 35, and West, 38, were married last year in Florence, Italy, in a gala ceremony filmed for E!'s "Keeping Up With the Kardashians." West proposed to his bride in October 2013, renting out San Francisco's AT&T Park for the occasion.

West was in New York earlier this week for the Footwear News Achievement Awards, where he gave a rambling 20-minute acceptance speech after his Adidas Yeezy Boost sneaker was named shoe of the year.

Witness thought Art Basel Miami Beach stabbing was an act

MIAMI BEACH, Florida (AP)—One woman stabbed another during a fight at world-famous Art Basel Miami Beach, causing at least one patron to think he was watching performance art.

Miami Beach Detective Kathleen Prieto told the Miami Herald the suspect stabbed the victim's arms and neck during Friday's fight. She said the victim is being treated for non-life threatening injuries. The suspect was arrested.

The fight happened near an exhibit by artist Naomi Fisher. She told the Herald one witness thought it was a performance with fake blood until he realized the blood was real.

The paper says others thought the police tape cordoning the area was an installation.

Art Basel Miami Beach spokeswoman Sara Fitzmaurice said in an email to The Associated Press Friday, "The attack was an isolated incident that was immediately secured. Our thoughts are with the victim."

Holiday greeting need not prompt a religious claim

DEAR ABBY: Every year around the holidays, well-intentioned strangers wish me and my family "Merry Christmas!" Even though we are Jewish, I have always regarded it to be a kind gesture to spread good cheer. I smile and return the greeting.

My children have asked me why I don't tell people we're Jewish and that we don't celebrate Christmas. I don't feel I need to educate strangers when they're just trying to be friendly, but my kids don't agree. We've had several discussions about being friendly and polite, but still they ask if being Jewish is something to keep secret or be embarrassed about.

I don't want to rain on anyone's parade, but I do want to give my kids the message that we are proud of who we are. How do you recommend I handle this situation, because it happens a lot?

JILL IN SANTA ROSA, CALIF.

DEAR JILL: Explain to your children that you return the greeting to be polite, not because you feel being Jewish is anything to be ashamed of. The strangers who do this are saying something nice, and you are returning the greeting.

However, the response to people to whom you are closer and with whom there will be a deeper relationship should be different. To them, your children should explain that they are Jewish and that you celebrate Hanukkah rather than Christmas. When you're with them, if they feel the need to assert their Jewish identity, they should go right ahead and do it.

DEAR ABBY: I have been with my boyfriend for 16 years. Last year I found out he was married before I met him and still is married to her. He never told me he was married when I met him—or at all. If he had, we wouldn't be together.

His wife got ahold of me on Facebook because she was looking for him. I was in disbelief. We almost got married in 2007, which would have been bigamy. I have stayed with him for the sake of our kids, but I'm miserable.

I recently reconnected with a male friend from high school. We have been talking, but not romantically. He knows my situation. The problem is, he said that he had a crush on me back in school and still does. I have feelings for him, too -- more than just friendship. What do I do?

EMOTIONALLY LOST IN MARYLAND

DEAR LOST: I can only imagine the extent to which your trust has been shaken. What you need to do right now is recognize how vulnerable you are feeling. What you shouldn't do is rebound from one relationship into another.

Because you are no longer happy with your boyfriend, consult an attorney to ensure your children's father lives up to his financial obligations to them. If you don't have a job, start looking for one to supplement the child support income.

Once you have established economic independence, you will be in a better position to judge whether or not your old high school friend is your knight in shining armor.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

DEAR ABBY

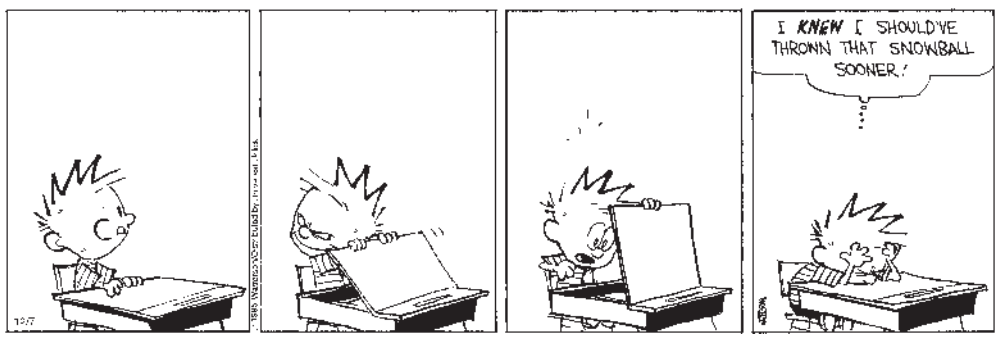
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

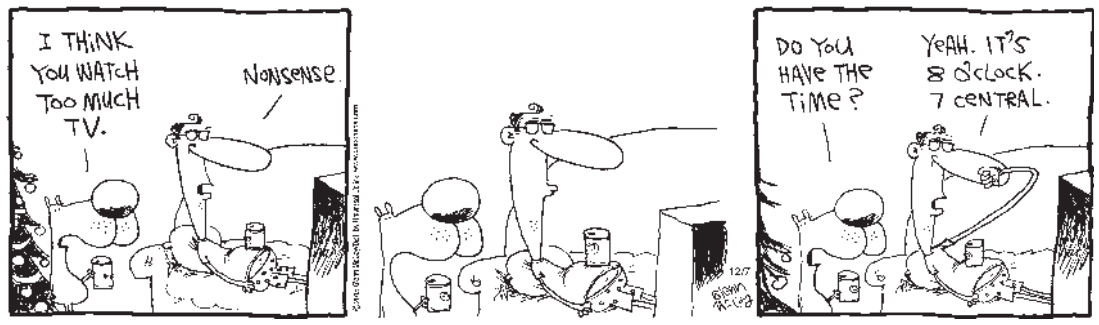
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

HEY! YOU GUYS FEEL LIKE A FUN PUZZLE?
THIS FEELS LIKE A TRICK.
TOTALLY.
IS THIS LIKE THE "UNTANGLE THE EARBUDS" PUZZLE?
THEY'RE ON TO US.
DANG.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

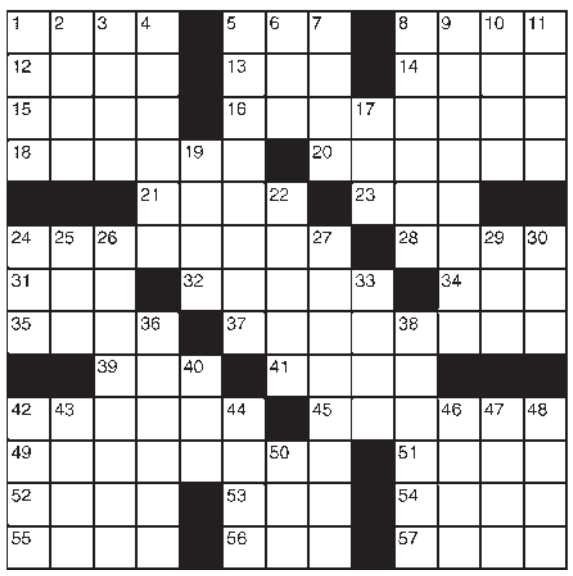
ACROSS
1 Bathe
5 Trucker's wheels
8 Wood cutter
12 Austen heroine
13 Kooky Philips
14 Follow
15 Good times
16 Flipper's family
18 Whopper rival
20 Cut-throat
21 Flubs
23 "— takers?"
24 Nationalists
28 Farm unit
31 Buckeyes sch.
32 "— Like It"
34 Many a time
35 Pen pals?
37 Fish-eating birds
39 Buzzer
41 Ignore
42 CNBC topics
45 Jenna Elfman TV role
49 War horses
51 Taxis
52 Museo display
53 Elton's john
54 Provo's state
55 Opposite of 15-Across
56 Flat "six-pack"
57 Zaire's Mobutu — Seko

DOWN
1 Jack or Clifton
2 Mine (Fr.)
3 Urban haze
4 Thor's weapon
5 Disaster aid group
6 Texter's "I think"
7 Tiger's sport
8 Goddess of wisdom
9 Milk dispenser?
10 Element No. 30
11 "Or —!"
17 Ms. Zadora
19 La Scala solo
22 Eye sores
24 Mom's mate
25 "Just — thought!"
26 Harbor helpers
27 Nameless folks
29 D.C. stadium initials
30 Sci-fi invaders
33 "Nope!"
36 Hush-hush
38 Old calculator
40 Heart chart (Abbr.)
42 Union foe
43 By way of, briefly
44 Actress Ward
46 Motel info
47 Some corp. hires
48 Ace Arthur
50 Take the money and run?

Solution time: 26 mins.

H	O	G		D	A	M	S		Y	A	L	E
I	P	O		O	L	L	A		U	K	E	S
Y	E	A	H	B	A	G	V		C	A	T	E
A	D	I	I	R	S		S	F	C			
			N	I	T		V	E	A	S	T	Y
H	A	Y	C	N		P	E	W		O	R	A
A	L	O	U		S	A	S		O	L	A	N
Z	E	D		A	H	S		S	M	O	C	K
Y	E	A	R	L	Y		S	T	A			
			O	P	T		H	E	N	S	O	N
O	H	M	Y		Y	O	U	N	I	N	N	Y
A	B	R	A		P	I	C	O		A	T	E
F	O	I	L		E	L	K	S		P	O	T

Friday's answer 12-7



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Aaron Carter, 28; C. Thomas Howell, 49; Tom Waits, 66; Ellen Burstyn, 83.

Happy Birthday: Keep moving forward and don't look back. Change can be good as long as you stay within your means and keep your intentions honorable. Protect your health, your heart and your emotional wellness from those trying to bring you down. Make decisions based on facts, not hearsay, and express your plans clearly to avoid misunderstandings. Creative solutions will lead to recognition. Your numbers are 8, 14, 23, 27, 32, 36, 41.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Learn through observation, communication and exploration of unfamiliar territory. Expand your interests and plans. Traveling to new places will help you discover what you want to do next and help you secure a foothold in reaching your destination. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): A break will come your way via an unlikely source. Intensity regarding personal matters will surface. Don't be shy when it comes to love. Share your feelings and plans, but don't pay for someone else's mistakes. You can't buy love. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't leave anything to chance. Live within your means no matter what others do with their money. Joint ventures will not turn out well. Time is money, so don't waste any time implementing the changes you want to make. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Nothing is worth getting too upset about. Let things unfold naturally without complaints or negative thoughts. Love is on the rise and positive changes can be made. Make new developments work in your favor. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Take care of your home, your family and your emotional and physical well-being. You will discover something interesting if you attend a lecture or networking function. Be cautious while traveling and avoid disputes with colleagues. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Problems will surface at home or with someone you are in a partnership with if you aren't specific about how you present or gather information. Put more time and effort into personal changes that will improve your appearance. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Plan a road trip or initiate talks with people you want to collaborate with in order to bring about positive change to your community. Take action by standing up for those who cannot speak for themselves. You will gain recognition for your efforts. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Make alterations at home or to your personality that will bring you greater joy. Don't let someone from your past disrupt your plans or your life. Information will be revealed that will help you make a decision. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Keep moving forward and don't look back. Use your energy wisely and make a point to bring about the changes necessary to gain clear passage to pursue your dreams. Don't wait for someone else to make the first move. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You'll have a handle on whatever comes your way. Your ability to mix and match and wheel and deal will draw positive attention and the opportunity to get ahead. Romance is highlighted, and a celebration should be planned. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Consider what you would like to do and forge ahead. Don't let fear of failure or other limitations stand between you and your goals. A unique way of doing something will catch on and make you look good. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Put your efforts into something you believe in. Don't let a challenge stop you. Not everyone will be on your side, but if you do your best to avoid the opposition, you will prove that you are a force to be reckoned with. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are creative and a trouble-shooter. You are complex and passionate.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	1		9	2				
7			6			5		
		5		7		3	1	
9	7				3			
1		4				2		7
			4				6	3
	8	1		6		4		
		3			8			5
				5	2		9	

Difficulty Level ★ 12/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's SUDOKU Answer

2	5	9	4	8	7	3	6	1
3	8	7	1	6	5	9	2	4
6	1	4	9	3	2	5	8	7
8	9	6	7	1	4	2	5	3
1	3	2	6	5	9	7	4	8
4	7	5	8	2	3	1	9	6
5	2	1	3	4	8	6	7	9
9	6	8	2	7	1	4	3	5
7	4	3	5	9	6	8	1	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/07

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

HAPPY HANUKKAH Solution: 9 letters

M	U	S	I	C	S	T	E	L	E	M	I	G	N	C
I	P	V	T	G	U	T	H	L	R	V	S	A	O	A
R	R	E	O	S	Y	S	U	G	P	N	O	M	I	N
A	A	L	R	E	A	I	T	N	I	M	M	L	T	D
C	Y	S	A	K	L	T	D	O	O	E	E	O	A	E
L	E	I	H	T	P	D	C	D	M	D	A	T	N	L
E	R	K	I	A	T	I	S	O	I	S	L	A	I	A
U	U	U	H	L	M	V	R	E	S	S	S	T	M	B
G	Z	R	A	T	S	A	R	C	K	T	H	O	U	R
O	T	T	R	G	T	D	S	Ⓗ	A	A	H	P	L	U
G	Z	L	O	I	N	D	W	H	Ⓞ	N	C	G	L	M
A	O	E	N	F	I	O	G	N	I	Ⓛ	D	N	I	K
N	A	G	E	T	H	O	L	I	D	A	Ⓨ	L	A	L
Y	M	E	M	S	S	E	G	N	A	H	C	X	E	P
S	U	N	S	E	T	O	Y	I	N	A	G	F	U	S

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Candelabrum, Candles, Coins, Commemorating, Customs, David, Donuts, Dreidel, Eight, Exchange, Gelt, Gifts, Gimel, Holiday, Holy, Illumination, Kindling, Kislev, Latkes, Lights, Love, Maoz Tzur, Meals, Menorah, Miracle, Music, Pancakes, Play, Potato, Prayer, Shamash, Shin, Show, Star, Sufganiyot, Sunset, Synagogue, Temple, Torah, Yiddish

Last Friday's Answer: Coating

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Pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Adoption Of:	)	**FCD-AD-CIVIL ACTION NO. 15-0575**
Josiah Anthony C. Ito Minor Child	)	
By:	)	
Robert Brandon C. Cruz Petitioner(s)	)	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing 02/29/2016 at 1:30PM in Courtroom 205A, before the Honorable Judge Govendo.

Dated this 1st day of December, 2015.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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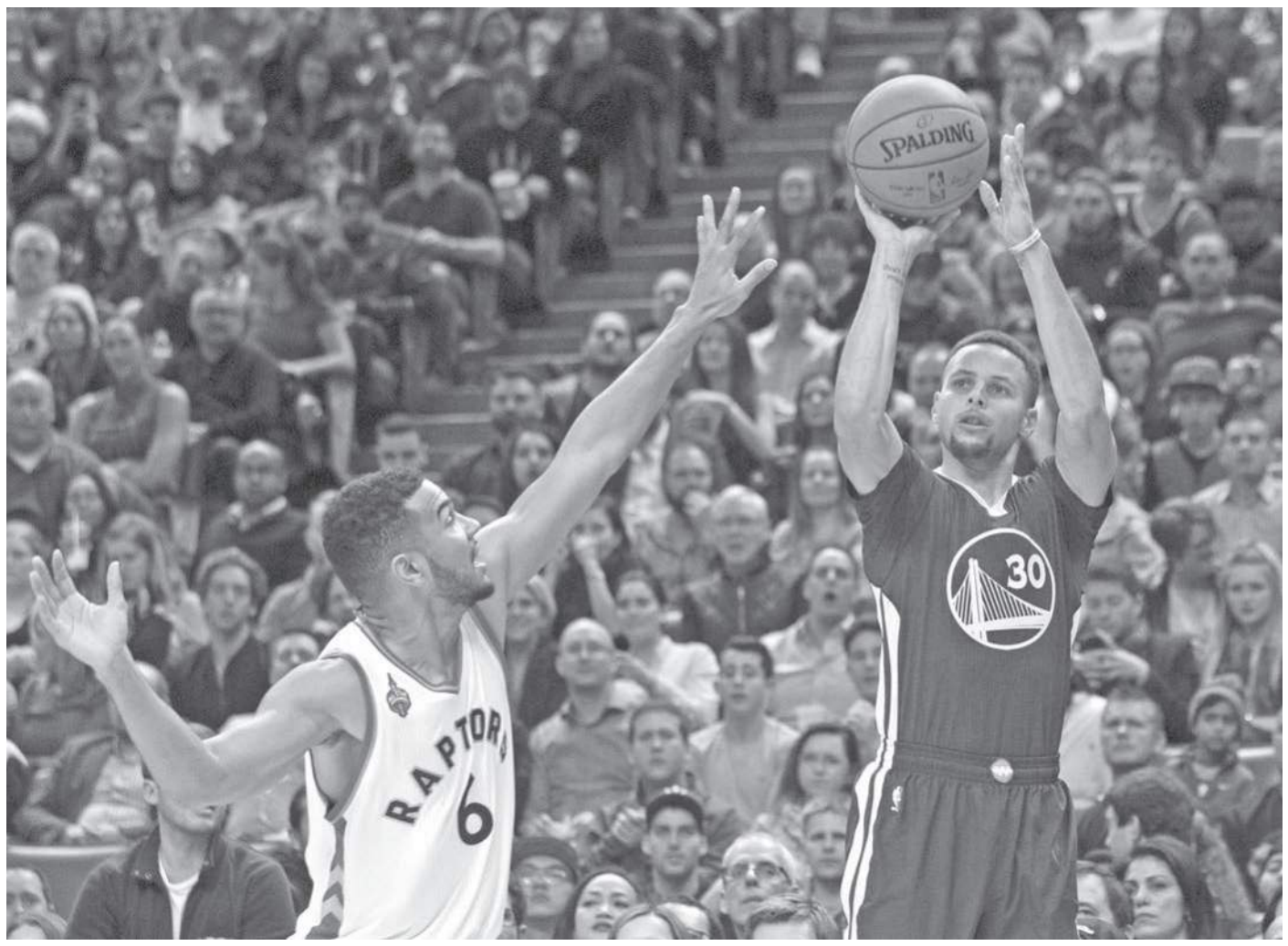

AP
Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry (30) shoots over Toronto Raptors' Corey Joseph during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Toronto, Saturday, Dec. 5, 2015.

TORONTO (AP)— Stephen Curry likes playing in Toronto, and it shows.

Curry made nine 3-pointers and scored 44 points, leading the undefeated Golden State Warriors to a 112-109 victory over the Raptors on Saturday.

Curry was 14 for 24 from the field and 9 for 15 from beyond the arc as Golden State pushed its NBA-record start to 21-0. The NBA MVP is averaging 30 points for his six career games at Toronto, where his father, Dell, played for his final three seasons.

"I have great memories of being here watching my dad play. I got some shots up on that rim for three years every game night," he said.

"I enjoy coming back here and playing, it's a familiar setting."

Klay Thompson added 26 points for the Warriors, and Draymond Green had 16 points, nine rebounds and six assists.

Heat 99, Cavaliers 84

In Miami, Dwyane Wade and Tyler Johnson scored 19 points apiece, and Miami took advantage of Cleveland's decision to hold out LeBron James.

Goran Dragic scored 17 points, Chris Bosh added 14 and Gerald Green had 12 for the Heat, who held Cleveland to 36 percent shooting and sent the Cavaliers to their third straight loss.

Richard Jefferson started in place of James and led Cleveland with 16 points. James was given the night off to rest, the first game he has missed for the Cavaliers this season.

Heat fans serenaded him with a "LeBron is tired" chant in the fourth quarter.

Spurs 108, Celtics 105

In San Antonio, LaMarcus Aldridge scored 17 points, and San Antonio improved to 11-0 at home.

Boris Diaw scored 16 points for the Spurs, and Kawhi Leonard and Manu Ginobili each had 15.

Isaiah Thomas had 23 points for the Celtics. Amir Johnson finished with 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Boston missed its last chance when it threw the ball out of bounds on an attempted full-court inbounds pass to Jared Sullinger.

Clippers 103, Magic 101

In Los Angeles, Jamal Crawford scored 16 of his 32 points in the fourth quarter, helping the Clippers stop the Magic's five-game winning streak.

Blake Griffin had 28 points and 13 rebounds for Los Angeles, and reserve Wesley Johnson scored 21 points. The Clippers played without injured guards Chris Paul and J.J. Redick.

Reserve Victor Oladipo scored a season-high 24 points and Elfrid Payton added 21 points for the Magic, who blew all of a 12-point lead early in the fourth.

That's when the Clippers got three straight 3-pointers, one by Johnson and two by Crawford, as part of a 22-7 run that gave them a 99-96 lead.

Jazz 122, Pacers 119, OT

In Salt Lake City, Derrick Favors scored a career-high 35 points, and Utah rallied for the win.

Favors converted a three-point play to help send the game to overtime, and then added six more points in the extra period. Favors had a layup off a pick-and-roll with Trey Burke with 17.1 seconds left, and George Hill missed a potential tying 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Indiana wasted career-high 48 points from Paul George, who carried the offensive load for much of the night. But two missed jumpers down the stretch of regulation helped Utah come back.

Favors also grabbed 13 rebounds, and Gordon Hayward had 22 points, five rebounds and five assists.

Hornets 102, Bulls 96

In Chicago, Nicolas Batum scored 12 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter, leading Charlotte to the win.

Cody Zeller and Kemba Walker had 17 points apiece for the Hornets, who played their first road game since Nov. 17 in New York. Spencer Hawes added 14 points and Batum also grabbed 11 rebounds.

Jimmy Butler scored 25 points and Derrick Rose had 19 for the Bulls, who fell to 7-2 at the United Center. Pau Gasol scored 13 points in his 1,000th career regular-season game.

Chicago and Charlotte were tied at 94 before Zeller made two free throws and Walker hit a jumper with 28.9 seconds remaining.

Rockets 120, Kings 113

In Houston, James Harden scored 31 points, Dwight Howard had 22 and Houston beat Sacramento for its third straight win.

Harden made a 3-pointer with about 90 seconds left to make it 115-109 and seal the win.

DeMarcus Cousins, who missed the first meeting with the Rockets because of an injury, was hampered by foul trouble and finished with 14 points and nine rebounds. He fouled out with a little over two minutes left.

Ben McLemore scored 19 for the Kings.

Houston has won seven in a row against Sacramento.

Nuggets 108, 76ers 105

In Philadelphia, Danilo Gallinari scored 24 points for Denver, including the go-ahead slam dunk with under a minute remaining.

Will Barton added 16 points for the Nuggets, who ended a five-game road trip by winning their second straight after snapping an eight-game skid on Thursday.

Robert Covington scored 18 points and Isaiah Canaan had 15 for Philadelphia, which dropped to 1-20.

Philadelphia rookie Jahlil Okafor sat out the second of a two-game suspension imposed by the team on Wednesday after the release of a second video from a nightclub fight in Boston on Nov. 25.

Bucks 106, Knicks 91

In Milwaukee, Michael Carter-Williams had 20 points, and the Bucks used a 21-4 run in the third quarter to pull away for the win.

Jabari Parker added 17 points, including a dunk and a jumper during the decisive spurt that pushed Milwaukee to a double-digit lead.

The Knicks trailed by 21 with 7:04 left in the third quarter when coach Derek Fisher replaced his entire starting five following a technical foul on Jose Calderon at the end of the run. The fresh lineup settled the team, though New York could get no closer than nine the rest of the night.

Carmelo Anthony scored 18 points for the Knicks.

Trail Blazers 109, Timberwolves 103

In Minneapolis, Damian Lillard overcame a slow start to finish with 19 points and seven assists, and the Trail Blazers rallied from 17 points down in the third quarter to beat the Timberwolves.

C.J. McCollum added 17 points for Portland.

Lillard missed nine of his first 12 shots. But his driving layup with 18.8 seconds left helped hold off a charge from the Timberwolves, who also gave up a 17-point lead to the Blazers in their home opener on Nov. 2.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 27 points and 12 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who fell to 2-8 at home this season.

Warriors so good, they're turning rivals into fans

By PAUL NEWBERRY
AP NATIONAL WRITER

When Byron Scott forgets he's a coach of a rival team, just focuses on the game he loves, he can't help but be impressed with the Golden State Warriors.

He's hardly alone.

All around the NBA, Steph Curry & Co. are turning the teams they beat night after night into adoring fans.

Heck, with the Warriors off to a record 20-0 start, there's actually a reason to pay attention to hoops before the season's traditional Christmas Day tipoff.

"I love watching great basketball. I love watching team basketball," said Scott, who doesn't get to see that much as coach of the struggling Los Angeles Lakers. "And that team is the ultimate team."

No doubt about that. Look no farther than Golden State's 29.5 assists per game, a stat that Scott can really appreciate. He played on the 1984-85 Lakers, who hold the NBA assists record (31.4) and went on to capture the NBA championship with one of those juggernauts led by Magic Johnson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and James Worthy.

Scott says it might be time to start putting the Warriors in that same category, even though their body of work isn't nearly as deep as, say, those Lakers squads of the 1980s, or the Larry Bird-led Celtics of the same era, or Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls in the 1990s, who won six championships over an eight-year period.

These Warriors have only one title so far.

Clearly, they want more.

Many, many more.

"These first 20 games, they are among the top two or three top teams that I've seen," said Scott, who got a firsthand look at that greatness when the Lakers were blown out by 34 points a couple of weeks ago. "I mean, right now they're on a different level than any other team in the NBA."

And that's a good thing, a really good thing.

The Warriors, more than any other team, and Curry, more than any other player, have exploited the NBA's long-running crackdown on physical play. While some may miss Bill Laimbeer body-slamming anyone who dared venture into the lane, it's much more fun to watch Golden State doing its Harlem Globetrotters impression - weaving all over the court in a magnificent tapestry, showing off a dazzling array of passes and dribbles, doing everything but splashing the refs with a bucket of confetti.

It's a style of play everyone should aspire to, a display of the game at its elegant best.

"When you see a team doing it at that level," Atlanta Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer said Friday, "it sets a great example for teams across the league, including ourselves. It's the way we want to play, and move the ball, and play smart basketball, and all those things. ... There's a little bit of fan, a little bit of, 'Can we get better and improve ourselves?' They're good for the league."

Now that they've set the mark for most wins at the start of the season, the Warriors' next target is 33 - as in the longest winning streak in NBA history, set by the Lakers during the 1971-72 season. Longer term, Golden State seems poised to make a run at 72-10 - the greatest season in NBA history, a standard established by Jordan's Bulls at the height of their dominance in 1995-96.

The Warriors weren't too far off that mark a season ago, finishing 67-15. Now, having claimed the franchise's first title in 40 years, the Bulls' record could be in jeopardy.

"They play with a purpose, and they play with no agenda besides winning," Scott said during a morning shootaround in Atlanta, before the Lakers took on the Hawks. "Even though Steph is getting a lot of the accolades, which he deserves, absolutely, all the other players on that team, all they want to do is win."

Sources: Greinke, Diamondbacks get $206.5 M, 6-year deal

By JANIE McCAULEY
AP BASEBALL WRITER

AP
In this Sept. 18, 2015, file photo, Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Zack Greinke throws to the plate during the first inning of a baseball game against the Pittsburgh Pirates in Los Angeles.

The Arizona Diamondbacks unveiled their snazzy new uniforms one day, then landed a new ace to wear them the next.

Surprise! Zack Greinke is coming to the desert.

The D-backs beat out the division rival Dodgers and Giants to unexpectedly win the Greinke sweepstakes Friday night, acquiring the free agent ace they hope will get the franchise contending again—and fast. He reached an agreement on a $206.5 million, six-year contract, sources told The Associated Press.

The major league ERA leader and runner-up for the NL Cy Young Award helped lead the Dodgers to their third straight division title this season. Then, the 32-year-old righty opted out of his contract, leaving $71.5 million on the table—and wound up with the richest deal, by yearly average, in baseball history.

The sources spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because there hadn't been an official announcement. Fox Sports first reported an agreement.

Greinke was the second former AL Cy Young winner to get a mega-contract this week. David Price joined the Boston Red Sox for $217 million over seven years. The moves came as teams prepared to head this weekend to the winter meetings in Nashville, Tennessee.

Greinke's new deal contains deferred money. The $34.4 million average will be the sport's highest, topping Price's $31 million.

Earlier this offseason, pitcher Johnny Cueto turned down a $120 million offer from the Diamondbacks after he helped Kansas City win the World Series and became a free agent.

Instead, the Diamondbacks reeled in an even bigger prize. They had money to spend - last February, they signed a TV deal with Fox Sports Arizona for more than $1.5 billion over 20 years.

Greinke's contract gave him the flexibility to find a new home. He was in prime position, too, after setting a career high for wins by going 19-3 and posting a 1.66 ERA that was the best in the majors in 20 years.

In December 2012, Greinke signed a $147 million, six-year deal with the Dodgers that included an opt-out clause. He exercised it and walked away from a whopping amount over the next three years.

"We made a very strong offer to retain Zack but clearly he found a deal that fit better for him and his family," Dodgers president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman said in a statement. "We are now hard at work on our alternatives."

Out of the playoffs since 2011, the Diamondbacks finished 79-83 last season, 13 games behind the West champion Dodgers and also trailing the Giants, who have won three of the last six World Series.

Arizona scored the second-most runs in the NL last season, but was thin in the pitching department—Diamondbacks starters threw the second-fewest innings in the league.

The Diamondbacks tried this season to clear salary. In June, they traded pitcher Bronson Arroyo to Atlanta to further reduce their payroll.

"It is more of what we are trying to do. The money is definitely important," Diamondbacks general manager Dave Stewart said at the time. "We said that we are going to try to do what we can to promote our young pitchers but also give ourselves a chance to make some savings so that we can have an opportunity to do things at a later date."

On Friday night, they did a really big thing. After revealing futuristic uniforms for 2016 a day earlier, Arizona found its new big star to wear one.

Greinke's ERA was the lowest in the majors since Greg Maddux had a 1.63 ERA in 1995. Greinke had a scoreless streak of 45 2-3 innings this summer.

He was durable, too, pitching 222 2-3 innings. A Gold Glove winner who also likes to hit, he teamed with lefty Clayton Kershaw to give the Dodgers a formidable 1-2 combo at the top of the rotation.

The Dodgers had hoped Greinke and Kershaw, plus a roster that added up to the highest payroll in baseball, could lead them to their first World Series crown since 1988. Instead, LA lost in the division round to the New York Mets in October.

Greinke went 51-15 during his three years with the Dodgers.

Arizona will lose its first-round draft pick, No. 13 overall. The Dodgers gain a compensatory pick, likely No. 41.

Greinke's departure leaves the Dodgers with an unstable rotation beyond Kershaw. Brett Anderson returns after his first healthy season since 2009 and young Alex Wood is also back, but Hyun-Jin Ryu is coming off shoulder surgery that cost him all of last season and Brandon McCarthy is out until midseason after Tommy John surgery.

In October, the Dodgers parted ways with now-Marlins manager Don Mattingly and later hired former major leaguer Dave Roberts as his replacement.

A top priority of the Giants this offseason was to build up their rotation behind 2014 World Series MVP Madison Bumgarner. Matt Cain was slowed by further elbow issues after undergoing surgery late in the 2014 season, while right-hander Tim Hudson retired and Mike Leake and Ryan Vogelsong are free agents.

MLB BRIEFS

Source: Tigers agree to $16M, 2-year deal with Pelfrey

DETROIT (AP)—Free-agent right-hander Mike Pelfrey has reached a $16 million, two-year agreement with the Detroit Tigers, according to a person with knowledge of the deal. The person spoke on condition of anonymity Friday because the deal, which was still subject to a successful physical, had not been announced. The 31-year-old Pelfrey would join a Detroit rotation bolstered by the signing of right-hander Jordan Zimmermann less than a week ago. Pelfrey spent the last three seasons with Minnesota. He went 6-11 with a 4.26 ERA in 2015. The Tigers have been active this offseason. They've also traded for closer Francisco Rodriguez and outfielder Cameron Maybin. Detroit finished last this year after winning the AL Central the previous four seasons. The decline was in large part because of the starting rotation's struggles. Justin Verlander didn't find his form until the second half of the season, and Anibal Sanchez finished with a 4.99 ERA. The Tigers traded David Price at the deadline, receiving left-hander Daniel Norris, a highly regarded prospect. Pelfrey spent his first seven seasons with the New York Mets, going 50-54 with a 4.36 ERA. The Tigers will have to hope he can stay healthy. Pelfrey was limited to five starts in 2014 because of groin problems, but he made 30 starts in 2015.

Reports: Cubs agree to 2-year deal with Lackey

CHICAGO (AP)—Multiple media outlets are reporting the Chicago Cubs and free-agent pitcher John Lackey have agreed to a two-year contract. Fox Sports was the first to report the deal on Friday. The move reunites Lackey with former teammates Jon Lester and David Ross. Lackey, Lester and Ross helped the Red Sox win the World Series in 2013. Cubs executive Theo Epstein also was the general manager in Boston when Lackey signed a free-agent deal with the Red Sox in 2009. The 37-year-old Lackey went 13-10 with a 2.77 ERA in 33 starts for NL Central champion St. Louis this season. He got the start in Game 4 of the NL Division Series at Wrigley Field and pitched just three innings in a season-ending 6-4 loss to Chicago.

Samardzija agrees to $90M, 5-year deal with Giants

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—The San Francisco Giants landed a top-tier starter to complement ace Madison Bumgarner, agreeing with free agent Jeff Samardzija on a $90 million, five-year contract Saturday a day after losing out on Zack Greinke.

The club said the deal will be formally announced once Samardzija passes a physical that's scheduled for Tuesday.

"You look at his track record, you look at the presence that he brings to the mound, you look at the back-to-back-to-back 200-plus innings seasons, you realize that this guy is a force to be reckoned with," Giants general manager Bobby Evans said on a conference call. "There's a reason why we targeted him. There's a reason why we focused on him as one of our top priorities."

This was the third large contract for a pitcher this week. David Price joined the Boston Red Sox on a $217 million, seven-year deal, then on Friday night Greinke chose the Arizona Diamondbacks over the Giants and three-time defending NL West champion Los Angeles Dodgers, his former team. Sources told The Associated Press he agreed to a $206.5 million, six-year deal.

When asked whether seeing Greinke join the D-Backs over the rival Dodgers, Evans quipped: "Victory would have been the American League or Japan."

Evans said there was never a notion that the Giants and Dodgers were the only clubs competing for Greinke.

Samardzija won 11 games this year for the Chicago White Sox for his first double-digit victory total in eight major league seasons, going 11-13 with a 4.96 ERA in 32 starts. The 30-year-old right-hander spent the second half of the 2014 season pitching in the Bay Area with the Oakland Athletics following his trade from the Chicago Cubs. The 214 innings in 2015 were the second-highest total of his career.

"This guy's a horse, even in tough times in what they were doing in Chicago, he still put 200-plus innings on the board," Evans said. "His numbers may be affected by the third place he's pitched in two years. There may be some mechanical adjustments he needs to make."

Samardzija receives a $3 million signing bonus to be paid out soon, plus an additional $6 million to be spread over the final four years of the deal in installments of $1.5 million each. He has a limited no-trade clause that gives the pitcher the ability to name eight teams to which he would accept a trade.

His 2016 salary will be $9 million, then $18 million in each of the following four years plus the $1.5 million from the signing bonus.

The Giants won the World Series in 2010, '12 and '14 but missed the playoffs in the odd years, including this past season. A top priority this offseason was to build their rotation behind Bumgarner, the 2014 World Series MVP.

"When you look at the relative performance this year, you have to connect the dots to his past performance as well and really the dominant performance at some level even in '14 and the freshness of his arm," Evans said of Samardzija. "You've got a guy who has made the conversion from reliever to starter and has done that well. There's a lot of innings left in that arm."

Matt Cain was slowed by further elbow issues after surgery late in the 2014 season that cost him the postseason. Tim Hudson retired and Mike Leake and Ryan Vogelsong are free agents. Two-time NL Cy Young Award winner Tim Lincecum's future is unclear following left hip surgery Sept. 3.

San Francisco had said there was interest in bringing back Leake, but informed the pitcher that wouldn't be the team's first order of business.

"Mike Leake's still very much on the radar," Evans said.

Getting a major deal done before next week's winter meetings in Nashville, Tennessee, was important for the Giants brass.

"It is refreshing, especially given the relative priority our pitching staff requires," Evans said.

Last month, the Giants signed homegrown All-Star shortstop Brandon Crawford to a $75 million, six-year contract that takes him through the 2021 season and includes a full no-trade clause.

Packers riding high after stunning win in Detroit

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP)—Packers coach Mike McCarthy left no doubt about where the team's no-time-left win in Detroit stands for him.

"Outside of the Super Bowl (title in the 2010 season), to me, that's our greatest regular-season win," said McCarthy, who's in his 10th year as Green Bay's coach.

"I couldn't sleep, so I sat up and watched it a few times on TV," he added Friday, less than 24 hours after the stunning victory. "It was a phenomenal play."

The media quickly dubbed it the "Motor City Miracle" and "Miracle in Motown" and other names. The resilient Packers added a different slogan to one of the most spectacular wins in their 97-year history: Scat Two Rebound Pass.

That's the name of the play used by the Packers to pull out their 27-23 comeback victory on the road against the Lions after time expired Thursday night. Aaron Rodgers' 61-yard throw coming after a penalty with 0:00 on the clock arced high into the air before coming down into the hands of leaping tight end Richard Rodgers in the end zone.

McCarthy called it the best throw he's seen in his 23 years in the league. It capped a second-half comeback from 20 points down, the largest in Rodgers' eight seasons as a starter. And after losing four of its previous five games, Green Bay (8-4) stayed on the heels of the NFC North-leading Minnesota Vikings.

"We had really put ourselves behind the eight ball as far as the division and the playoffs in general," linebacker Clay Matthews said. "So to bounce back and put ourselves in position to hopefully take back the North, it means a great deal."

The Packers, who don't play again until they host Dallas on Dec. 13, could be back atop the division after they return to work from having the full weekend off. The Vikings (8-3) have a home game against Seattle on Sunday.

What pleased McCarthy the most was having his team rally and overcome a great deal of adversity. Detroit jumped out to a 17-0 lead in the first quarter.

AP

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers is congratulated by teammates after his 61-yard touchdown pass to tight end Richard Rodgers on the last play of the game of an NFL football game against the Detroit Lions, Thursday, Dec. 3, 2015, in Detroit.

The Packers' decimated offensive line, which started the game without right tackle Bryan Bulaga and right guard T.J. Lang, lost center Corey Linsley to a reinjured ankle in the first half and left tackle David Bakhtiari briefly in the fourth quarter because of a reinjured knee.

After two straight 100-yard rushing games, Pro Bowl running back Eddie Lacy didn't play much for what McCarthy said might have been for a disciplinary reason. Lacy didn't make the start and had only five carries for 4 yards.

"Leading up the game, frankly, there's an internal football decision that was made," McCarthy said. "That's what resulted in Eddie's (reduced) reps."

But the Packers didn't flinch after falling behind 20-0 in the third quarter.

"Our guys play till the end, and they illustrated that last night," McCarthy said.

The Packers work on the play every week in practice the day before a game, and the 6-foot-4 Richard Rodgers out jumped everyone in the end zone for the ball.

"He went up and got it," McCarthy said.

Jets honor 18 military families with holiday party

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP)—The New York Jets saluted 18 military families with a holiday-themed party, complete with good, ol' St. Nick - Mangold.

The Atlantic Health Jets Women's Organization hosted the families, as identified by the United Service Organizations, for a celebration Friday at the team's training facility.

Jets center Nick Mangold played the role of Santa Claus, his bushy beard making him a natural pick, as children of military members hopped on his lap to make their holiday wishes and pose for pictures.

General manager Mike Maccagnan escorted the families around the team's facility, including the Jets' field house and weight room.

The families watched the Jets prepare for their game against the Giants on Sunday at practice in the morning, which was followed by the children decorating gingerbread houses and cookies and also creating care packages for their parents currently serving. Spouses of military personnel were also treated to manicures and massages, and all the families ended the day with dinner in the player cafeteria.

"During a time of the year where we are reminded to be thankful, our goal was to extend our sincerest gratitude for the sacrifices that our military families continuously make for our country," said Betty Maccagnan, wife of the Jets GM and a member of the Atlantic Health Jets Women's Organization. "We hope we accomplished that today."

Along with Betty Maccagnan, Taneka Bowles—wife of Jets coach Todd Bowles—and Dana Glat—wife of team president Neil Glat—help the team's community relations department oversee the AHJWO, which includes wives, fiancees and significant others of Jets players, coaches and football support employees as well as other female members of the team's staff. The AHJWO teams up with select charities in the community to hold events.

"It is with great pleasure that the AHJWO was able to host this event during the holiday season in honor of the United Service Organizations," Betty Maccagnan said.

'THE CRANK'

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title defense bid via triangle choke submission to improve to 11-1, while the Japanese bet dropped to 13-5.

Camacho could have won the lightweight title but he failed to make weight in last Thursday's weigh in one day before his championship bout against Jones of Underworld Extreme.

He was 3.9 lbs overweight while his opponent tipped the scales at 153, two less than the 155-lb limit. He also improved to 18-3 with 14 knockouts, while Jones dropped to 5-5 with 3 KOs.

Camacho, on a Facebook post, thanked everyone—including his family and friends—who continue to support him despite all odds. "Another growing experience in my martial arts career and in life."

"Thank you to my girl Sarah (and the little one on the way) for the backbone of my support system. All the love from family, friends and fans through this whole fight camp has been a true blessing," said Camacho.

"Thank you to all my training partners at Spike22 getting me ready for this fight. To Tyrone and his camp for making me rise to the occasion, I've grown tremendously. Thank you for believing in the dream and goals of an Island Boy," he added.

His victory somewhat eased the pain of the successive losses of Josh "Chaos" Duenas and cousins Roman" Sonic Boom" and Shane "Pikaboo" Alvarez against separate foes.

Duenas' bid of earning his first PXC win continues after suffering a first round TKO defeat on the hands of New Zealand's Kaiwhare Kara-France (11-5). He dropped to 4-6 with his last win was almost two years ago against Jordan Manglona in Trench Warz 17: Night of Champions.

Roman Alvarez's three-fight winning streak in the PXC and seven straight overall ended with a second-round TKO loss to Mark Abelardo, who climbed to 12-4 with six KOs.

Shane Alvarez, the last CNMI bet fighting, also failed in his own bid with a unanimous decision setback against Japan's Yutaro Muramoto in their 125-lb match. He now has three losses after 14 fights while Muramoto won his PXC debut to up his record to 3-1.

Cuki Alvarez, Shane's father and Roman's uncle, said the three Trench Tech warriors looked at the positive side of their respective defeats taking the loss as another learning experience and are moving forward.

"The goals remain the same. That never changes. We will be back to training [tonight] and will continue to work hard. Shane, Roman, and Josh all know what they 'could've done' or 'should've done' and will now work diligently on tightening up those holes in their game," added Alvarez.

JAPANESE

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up against were very good," he added through an interpreter.

Nakamura, the champion of all-Japan time trial (43K) this year, was talking of Konstantin Fast, who won last year's race with a time of 2:49:22, and Aleksandr Dorovskikh. Fast withdrew from this year's event the last minute, while Dorovskikh along with fellow Russian biker Aleksei Barkun came in 25 minutes late for the start of the race.

Dorovskikh ended up at ninth place in the men's pro division behind a group of Guam riders after clocking in at 3:53:22, while Barkun was last at No. 11 following his official time of 4:05:15. Guam's Jonathan Martin (3:10:33), Peter Lombard (3:11:47), and Jake Jones (3:21:33), Korea's Kaon Cho (3:21:48) and Saipan's Wunn Brillo (3:53:22) were the other participants in the men's pro division.

"I did not know that the Russians started late. I was worried of the Taiwanese so even though I am about to enter the finish line (loop), I made one final look to see where my opponents are," said Nakamura, who raised both arms in triumph as he was about to complete the race.

Nakamura's closest rival admitted the course got the better of him. Chen, through an interpreter, said the course is very technical with a lot of up and down roads, which they did not expect.

Meanwhile, in the women's division, Mieko Carey lived up to expectations as she got another win in the annual race.

Carey submitted 3:25:51 to finish way ahead of fellow Guam biker Manami Iijima (4:14:33) and good friend and Saipan's Kimiko McKagan (4:15:40).

"It's my last race for the season and I am glad I won and was able to race with my friends on Saipan," Carey said.

SIS

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Mock's spike, 12-5. The Geckos and the Eagles then split the next two points as both teams made errors, moving the former two points away from wrapping up the match, 12-6, and getting their first middle school crown since the league adopted a new name in 2007.

Mock served with the ball heading to the back line and GCA's Josh Pajarillaga attempting to toss the leather up, but it slipped and fell to the ground with no GCA player close enough to dig it. Mock served anew for match point and Pajarillaga did the same move and this time two of his teammates were near him, but failed to return the ball with the last hit blocked by the net.

With the three-set win, SIS 1 was awarded the championship trophy later after the girls high school finale. Joining Mock, Hartig, Goodwin, Chan, and Lee on the champion squad are Goodwin, Malika Miyawaki, Sally Lai, Henry and Anna Qian, and Justin Kosack.

The Geckos controlled the opening set, leading by as much as 9, 22-13, before GCA fought back, but fell short in the end after committing couple of errors. A wide return from Dwayne Torres gave SIS 1 the set point in the first set.

In the second set, it was the Eagles' turn to soar as they forced SIS 1 to make miscues, including a short return after a long rally that helped the former take a commanding 23-13 advantage. Back-to-back aces from Pajarillaga closed out the second set for the Eagles and extended the title match.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	12	9	.571	—
Boston	11	9	.550	½
New York	10	11	.476	2
Brooklyn	5	14	.263	6
Philadelphia	1	20	.048	11

Southeast Division

Miami	12	6	.667	—
Atlanta	13	9	.591	1
Charlotte	11	8	.579	1½
Orlando	11	9	.550	2
Washington	8	9	.471	3½

Central Division

Cleveland	13	7	.650	—
Chicago	11	6	.647	½
Indiana	12	7	.632	½
Detroit	11	9	.550	2
Milwaukee	8	13	.381	5½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	17	4	.810	—
Memphis	11	9	.550	5½
Dallas	11	9	.550	5½
Houston	10	11	.476	7
New Orleans	5	15	.250	11½

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	11	8	.579	—
Utah	9	9	.500	1½
Portland	9	12	.429	3
Minnesota	8	11	.421	3
Denver	8	13	.381	4

Pacific Division

Golden State	21	0	1.000	—
L.A. Clippers	11	9	.550	9½
Phoenix	8	12	.400	12½
Sacramento	7	14	.333	14
L.A. Lakers	3	16	.158	17

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maplas upsets Sonics, makes semis

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Maplas pulled the rug under the Sonics, 69-67, to march into the semifinals of the open east division of the 2015 San Antonio Community Action Network Basketball League last Thursday night at the San Antonio court.

Rommel Usi hit a floating jumper, Jun Rueda split his free throws, and Richard Villanueva made a steal in the homestretch to help the seventh-ranked Maplas upset the second-seeded Sonics and join earlier semifinalist Ask Y U b to the next round.

Usi's shot gave Maplas more distance, 68-65, after the Sonics moved to within a point, 65-66. The Sonics got 3 quick points off Chico Bondoc's first free throw conversion and a point-blanked shot after he was fed by Adrian Palacios, who collared the offensive rebound following the former's miss from the 15-foot line, 1:16 left in the match.

Usi tried to get the 3 points back, but his attempt from downtown was too strong and the Sonics took the rebound and pushed the ball with Erlan Lansang leading a fastbreak play. Fortunately for Maplas, Usi made up for his poor shot selection by keeping up with Lansang and forcing the Sonics wingman to fumble.

Maplas successfully stole the possession, but again took an ill-advised shot with Villanueva pulling up for a triple and missing the shot, too. The Sonics, on the other hand, trooped to the line after Jaymark De Guzman was fouled on his way to a layup. However, De Guzman went 0-for-2 from the stripe, allowing Maplas to keep the shaky lead.

With Maplas in possession, Ryan Odicta drove to the basket, hoping to either make the shot or draw a foul on the Sonics' Erick Dela Rosa. Neither happened, as Gerald Flores picked his pocket and the Sonics worked another fastbreak play, which Villanueva broke as he anticipated the pass intended for De Guzman.

Maplas then wasted several seconds on their 24-second shot clock before Usi attacked from the right key in front of their bench and unloaded the jumper just before Sonics defenders collapsed on him.

Now down by 3 with 18.5 seconds remaining on the clock, the Sonics sued for time. When the game resumed, they got a quick 2-pointer off a turnaround baseline jumper from De Guzman to slice the deficit to 1, 67-68, 15 seconds left in the game.

It was Maplas' turn to call the time out and at the resumption of the thrilling match, Villanueva and company did a good job moving the ball around and avoiding Sonics defenders until De Guzman hugged Rueda, 8.5 ticks to go in the game.

Rueda nailed the first free throw, but missed the second one. Palacios plucked the rebound, but threw an errant pass, as he went for the pitch to the right side of their frontcourt while the sprinting Flores was on the other side.

The miscue gave possession back to Maplas, which also turned the ball over in the next play with Odicta's pass to Rueda going too strong and out to the sideline in front of the Sonics bench. The Sonic then called their last timeout to set up for the game-tying 3-point shot. Palacios did the inbound and Melvin Cadiang received the ball, faking off for a triple, but Odicta did not bite on the bait and just put his arms up to prevent the former from getting a clear look at the basket and pulling up for a shot as time expired.

Meanwhile, Cholos 8th Division also barged into the semifinals after crushing Ferrera Builders, 108-80, in the west division pairing.

Cholos' multiple offensive options proved to be too much for Ferrera, as the former had four players scoring in double figures and six more contributing at least 6 markers apiece.

Ferrera still had a chance in the match after the third, as it faced a manageable deficit, 62-75, but Cholos went for the kill in the fourth en route to the 28-point winning margin.

First Game

Cholos 108 – Tabora 15, Norita 12, Lerio 10, Hernandez 10, Ritual 9, Lizama 9, Zalgatar 8, Laguimdam 8, Capalad 7, Rasa 6, Tobias 3, Rangamar 3.

Ferrera 80 –Pollisco 14, Eldich 13, Edralin 11, Cristobal 11, Serrano 9, Galvez 9, Reyes 8, Mina 5.

Scoring by quarters: 26-18, 51-38, 75-62, 108-80.

Second Game

Maplas 69 – Villanueva 24, Viray 21, Rueda 17, Barrios 2, Jumacquiao 2, Usi 2, Odicta 1.

Sonics 67 – De Guzman 13, Dela Rosa 12, Flores 11, Cadiang 8, Bondoc 7, Fidelino 6, Tekopua 4, Lansang 4, Palacios 2.

Scoring by quarters: 11-12, 34-32, 50-53, 69-67.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Maplas' Jun Rueda goes up for an uncontested layup, while the Sonics' Eric Dela Rosa looks on during the fourth quarter of their playoff game in the San Antonio caging last Thursday at the San Antonio caging.

Youth netters are November's best

HERAS

WOO

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Rising youth netters Jimin Woo and Isabel Heras earned the Northern Marianas Sports Association-Tan Siu Lin Foundation Male and Female Student Athletes of the Month for November.

Woo and Heras earned the monthly honors, given by NMSA during the group's monthly meeting at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium conference room, after their title-clinching performances in the recently concluded 7th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic.

CNMI Junior Team member Woo brought home two junior titles after sweeping his way in the boys U12 singles and doubles crown with partner Daniel Kang.

ATHLETES of the MONTH

Woo first won the doubles crown with Kang as they made short work of the partnership of Rintaro Miyawaki and Richard Steele, 6-1, 6-2, in the finals. They advanced to the title match after a 6-0, 6-0 shutout victory over brothers Bekcham and Ravi Richards in the semis.

The top seeded Woo, who finished third last year, then added the U12 singles trophy with a 6-0, 6-4 decision against No. 2 Seung Jin Paik.

Woo defeated Chris Kim, 6-4, 6-0, in the quarterfinals, and had an easy 6-0, 6-2 triumph over Roman Merletti of Guam in the semis.

Heras followed suit in the U16 girls division, winning the singles title with a 6-4, 6-4 victory against second seeded Tania Tan.

The top-ranked Heras earned a finals berth after a 6-1, 6-3 beating of Ami Tsukagoshi in the semifinals.

Heras, longtime CNMI tennis coach Jeff Race said, has accepted the International Tennis Federation's invitation to be part of the Pacific Oceania Touring Team.

The Pacific Oceania Touring Team will be competing in the Margaret Court Cup in Wodonga, Australia next month.

18 more teams start darts season with wins

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Eighteen more teams in six divisions scored victories over their respective opponents in the opening week of the Bud Light-Saipan Electronic Darts Association Winter/Spring season held in various bars on the island.

Naked Fish Ridin'Darrty, Doro's Snipers, and sister squads 6JMS 101 Proofers and Mafia defeated each of their foes in the A Division, which opened last Monday.

The story came out on the *Saipan Tribune*'s Tuesday issue, Dec. 2, with the Ridin'Darrty cruising to an 11-6 win over the Oleai No Fear, while the Snipers and 101 Proofers each defeated the Doro's Hunters, and 6JMS Predators, 10-7. The Mafia eked out a 9-8 triumph against the Jokers 81 Shockers in the other match.

The 6JMS G-Side Shooters, Jokers Spartans, Doro's Hot Points, and Jokers Chamberos duplicated their feat in the Tuesday B division.

The G-Side Shootesrs, Spartans, and Hot Points all pulled off 9-6 decisions against the VFW Dabarkadz, Jokers Northern Light, and the VFW Warriors while Chamberos escaped with an 8-7 victory over fellow Jokers-backed squad the 21 Shockers.

Action continues this week with the A Division tonight, Tuesday B tomorrow, Masters and C Division on Wednesday, and the Fanihi and Flame Tree on Thursday night. The rest of the results from last week are as follows:

MASTERS

- Pythons 12, Darteros 5
- Nakayoshi 10, Dart Daddies, 7

C DIVISION

- Managaha Boyz 13, C-Busters 2
- DNA Jump It! 9, Dart It! 6
- Dartcom 8, Mixed Nuts 7
- Puntan I Langit 8, C-Spartans 7

THURSDAY B

- Dart Vader 12, Dragons 3
- Mafia 11, Preba Darts 4
- Life After Darts 10, Fearless 5
- Parkeyu! 9, Ta-Chagi Talo! 6

FLAME TREE B

- Kyodai 12, Serial Killaz 3
- EM Tech's 9, Oneshot 6
- Ridin'Darrty 8, Latte Sparts 7
- No Fear 8, Na'Gupu 7

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Blue Koi Managaha Boyz were among the 18 teams that opened the Bud Light-Saipan Electronic Darts Association Winter/Spring season with a victory last week held in different bars on the island.

Curry scores 44 as perfect Warriors beat Raptors, 112-109

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Japanese pro rules Hell of the Marianas

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Japanese Ryutaro Nakamura had a triumphant return to the Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle Race as he topped last Saturday's competition.

Nakamura, who finished only third last year, completed the 100-kilometer race around the island in 2:54:50 and beat his 2014 time (2:56:13) to spoil the debuts of three Taiwanese riders. The Japanese pro made it to the finish line at Mariana Resort & Spa less than a minute ahead of National Taiwan University of Physical Education and Sport's Chien Liang Chen (2:55:08). Chen's teammates Wu Hsing Yang and Hsuan Ping Hsu came in at third and fourth place after timing in at 2:56:28 and 2:59:00, respectively.

The 24-year-old Nakamura and the three Taiwanese bikers stuck together around the first 50K of the race before the former had the chance to pull away as they were going uphill in the As Gono area. By the time Nakamura was heading down Capital Hill after various climbs in San Vicente, Papago, and Kagman, he managed to gain a three-minute lead against the Taiwanese trio. However, Chen, a veteran of various cycling races in Asia, inched closer on their way up to Radar in As Matuis.

"That was the most difficult part of the race because I am starting to get tired and the course is mostly uphill with a lot of turns. I kept on looking back to see if they are catching up on me," said Nakamura, who returned to Saipan with victory in mind.

"Last year, it was very difficult because I did not know the course very much. I had a hard time in the Kingfisher area and I was a bit cautious because the road was very slippery then. Also, the two Russians I was

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Japanese pro Ryutaro Nakamura raises his bike after winning the Hell of Marianas last Saturday.

Bittersweet win for 'The Crank'

FACEBOOK
Frank "The Crank" Camacho acknowledges the crowd after his technical knockout win against Guam's Tyrone "Bones" Jones of Team Underworld Extreme in last Friday night's Pacific Xtreme Combat 50 at the University of Guam Calvo Fieldhouse in Mangilao.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Frank "The Crank" Camacho defeated Tyrone "Bones" Jones by way of technical knockout in Friday night's Pacific Xtreme Combat 50 at the University of Guam Calvo Fieldhouse in Mangilao.

It was a bittersweet win for Camacho as the 26-year-old fighter completed the TKO victory against Jones in the second round of their supposed title bout for the vacant lightweight belt in the main event that also featured seven other fights including the Alex Volkanovski-Yusuke Yachi co-mainer.

Volkanovski crowned himself as the new 145-lb champion after foiling Yachi's

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SIS takes middle school v-ball title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan International School avoided another bridesmaid finish after outlasting Grace Christian Academy in a three-set finale, 25-18, 13-25, 15-6, in the middle school division of the 2015-2016 Coalition of Private Schools Sports Association Volleyball League last Friday at the Whispering Palms court.

The Geckos, who lost to Mt. Carmel School last season, gained enough cushion against an erratic Eagles team in the early part of the deciding third set and kept their momentum, despite a nearly 20-minute lull in the finals due to rain, to bag this year's middle school championship.

SIS 1 was ahead at 6-2 when it rained and organizers were forced to halt the match. The Geckos took the upper hand off GCA's three touches and three wide shots, Shea Hartig's ace, and Allen Lee's spike. The Eagles on the other hand, were rewarded two points off Steven Goodwin's wide spike and Hannah Chan's short service.

When the game resumed, the Geckos stretched their lead, 7-2, off another wide return from the Eagles, and the former threatened to break away, 11-4, after Eun Syu Hahn's spike hit the net. With their chances of pulling off an upset against SIS 1 dwindling, GCA called a timeout and scored a point after dropping the ball at the backline with neither of the two Geckos players in that area stepping in for a shot.

However, SIS 1 quickly got the point back off Seung You

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan International School's Sally Lai bends down for a bump during the first set of their game against Grace Christian Academy in the middle school division finale in the COPSSA volleyball league last Friday at the Whispering Palms court.